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Isaiah Berlin

THE LOST ART OF DIPLOMACY
Sir David Kelly

IN FEAR OF GADGETS
Emily Hahn

THE GERMAN INTELLECTUALS
Golo Mann

MY ENEMY'S ENEMY
Kingsley Amis

THE BAD OLD STYLE: *Hilary Corke*
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This Month's *ENCOUNTER* :—

● It is, these days, a routine exercise in sensibility to lament the predominance of politics in the life of the 20th century. Politics makes barren all personal relations; its brassy clamour overwhelms the still, sweet murmurs of humanity; it degrades our rhetoric and prostitutes our emotions; it prescribes our destinies with an arbitrary impudence; it presses on us, deforms us, kills the spirit in us—this catechism may be recited with almost infinite variation, depending on one's bias towards Humanism or the Church, or towards Left or Right in politics.

In fact, no one can deny that all these unpleasant things are happening to us. But is it "politics" that does the damage? Or is it precisely the absence of politics?

This is not a mere quibble or perverse paradox. We do think that there is a sense in which one can say that the politics of this century of ours is not politics at all, or is even a kind of anti-politics, in much the same way that 20th century painting has become a kind of anti-art, as the idea of "art" was once understood. That is to say, the forms and the unities that once defined a specific kind of human action have been, not merely revised, but dissolved. In politics, as in the arts, the romantic revolution has been made permanent.

The evidences of this revolution are so familiarly around us that we accept them as part of the natural background. Just as the painting of Picasso, the music of Bartok, the poetry of Eliot have become part of the academic curriculum; just as the most conservative Frenchman, on appropriate occasions chants the glories of the French Revolution; and just as the most conservative American will pose as a true Jeffersonian—so we are all now political romantics, accepting as axioms of politics what once would have been (and sometimes were) the wildest heresies. Politics may once have been considered as a practical activity, like medicine both an art and a science at once, whose aim (again like medicine) was to achieve a maximum of contentment in a wanton universe whose powers we could never control or even comprehend, and where a small measure of contentment was in itself a scarce and precious commodity. Today politics, partly under the influence of the technological revolution and partly for less material reasons that can only be pointed to as somehow connected with the "spirit of the age," is associated with imagination, enthusiasm, excitement, and is directed towards the fulfilment of such huge promises as to make it resemble an adventure in salvation, rather than an essay in improvement. As M. Denis de Rougemont recently remarked, "*Nous vivons dans un siècle où, très visiblement, ce n'est pas la politique qui fait l'histoire; mais une doctrine, une foi, une folie, une personne.*"

Of course, revolutions create, as well as destroy. And it is plain that the romantic revolution in politics has, in innumerable ways, made this a more compassionate and less callous world for the ordinary person. But there is always the danger that, carried to an extreme, this revolution may devour its children, as others have before it. A politics which invokes absolute solutions will always feel tempted to employ absolute methods. A politics which has opted for a brave new world is not likely to be too scrupulous about what happens to the old world, in which we the living happen to reside. In short, a politics which has an otherworldly bent is always in danger of inflicting heedless wounds on reality.

In perhaps no other sphere has this been so noticeable as in international affairs. As Sir David Kelly points out in his article, "The Lost Art of Diplomacy," shibboleths and slogans promising us the moon have almost lost us the earth—the notion of relying on The People to settle the problematical relations among nations has had about the same effect as if one were to rely on Love to settle all the problematical relations of marriage. Sir David, with his many years in the Foreign Service, has been in a privileged position to witness the entire process, from its inception to what is

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now—one hopes—the beginnings of its end, at least in the West. And as British Ambassador in Moscow in 1949–51, he had the further opportunity of seeing romantic politics at its purest, mixed with *Realpolitik* at its coarsest, with consequences as yet uncounted.

Sir David has just completed a new book, *The Hungry Sheep*, which Hollis and Carter will publish this summer. His article represents a condensed version of one of the chapters in that book.

● Our series on "The Intellectuals" has aroused considerable discussion, a sample of which we publish this month. Obviously, on such a subject one expects diversity of opinion. But we have also overheard a few friends mutter that the subject itself doesn't exist—that there may be writers, artists, teachers, journalists, but that there are no "intellectuals." The objection is plausible, but we do not think it is more than that. For though the "intellectuals" may not exist as a simple entity, they do exist as a pervasive influence—indeed, one can say that the romantic revolution in politics has largely been their work. To the extent that ours is an age of ideologies, it is a creation of the intellectuals: it is they who have brought the pathos of art, the rigour of science, and the fervour of religion into politics—for better and worse. In this month's issue, Mr. Isaiah Berlin explores the birth of the Russian *intelligentsia*, while Mr. Golo Mann traces the strange history of their German counterparts. In both these countries, the intellectuals were never seriously looked upon as a sovereign power—but, by what they did and did not do, they produced effects that were little short of ultimate.

Isaiah Berlin, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, is the author of two recent books which, for all their brevity, have had a deep impact. They are *The Hedgehog and the Fox* and *Historical Inevitability*. He is also the author of a biographical study of Karl Marx.

Golo Mann is a leading historian of modern Germany; and as the son of Germany's greatest living novelist, he has had a unique opportunity to study German intellectuals at first hand, over a period of many years. Mr. Mann is now Associate Professor of History at Claremont Men's College, California.

● With Professor Denis Brogan's "Table-talk" we introduce a new department of informal comment. Professor Brogan will continue in this department for the next few months, at least.

Notes on other Contributors:—

Emily Hahn will be known to our readers from her frequent contributions to the *New Yorker* and her various books: *James Brooke of Sarawak*, *Meet the British*, *England to Me*, etc. . . . John Morris, Director of the Third Programme, was for some years Professor of English Literature at Keio University, Tokyo. . . . Kingsley Amis's new novel, *That Uncertain Feeling*, will be published this summer. . . . Edward Crankshaw writes regularly on Russian affairs for the *Observer*. . . . Eric Ashby is Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast. . . . Chester Kallman was co-author, with W. H. Auden, of the libretto for Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. . . . Max Beloff is Nuffield Reader in Comparative Study of Institutions at Oxford.

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Sir David Kelly

The Lost Art of Diplomacy

THE lamentable slowness of the Western peoples and governments in realising the true nature of the Soviet threat, and in laying the foundations of the Atlantic Union, is not dissimilar to the slowness of the same people in realising the nature of the Nazi menace between 1932 and 1939—if indeed, judging by the practical test of rearmament, they ever realised it at all until the war was on them. Any enquiry into the deeper causes of this slowness and delay raises the question of the impact of democratic control over foreign policy. By democratic control I mean the persistent active influence of mass opinion, as opposed to occasional fits of excitement over special issues. This active influence is a novelty in modern Europe; we must go back for an analogy to the ancient Greek city states, and even there the analogy is only partial, for the citizens of those states were for the most part leisurely slave-owners, who were able to spend much of their time in endless political discussions.

Until the 20th century, this influence of mass opinion was only occasional. When exerted, whether in the Greek city states or in modern Europe, it was normally in favour of war-like action. A few examples out of many spring to mind at once: the wave of hysteria over Jenkins's ear; the French Revolution launching a twenty-year cycle of wars for freedom; the great outcry against the Prince Consort, who, rumour alleged, was incarcerated in the Tower of London because he was known to oppose the Crimean War; the war stampede of the French in 1870, graphically described by the British Ambassador in Paris in his despatches, when Bismarck doctored the Ems telegram with just that intention. However, throughout the 19th century, while the great urban masses were growing, their interest in foreign affairs was spasmodic. Canning and Palmerston both welcomed "public opinion" in this sphere, but they were thinking in terms of the educated middle class who studied their *Times* with solemn assiduity. Foreign policy was ultimately controlled by the educated middle classes, was greatly influenced by what Professor Mowat has called the "Monarchs' International," and was carried out by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and the old Diplomatic Corps: its guiding principle was the doctrine of the balance of power, sometimes called the European system or the concert of Europe.

The strain of the 1914–18 War, and ignorance of the events which had led up to it, were responsible for an extraordinary forgetfulness of an outstanding fact: from the Congress of Vienna in 1815 until the outbreak of war in 1914, Europe as a whole had known a century of peace, which—apart from the remote Russo-Turkish and Crimean wars—had been broken only by the relatively small campaigns for the unification of Italy, and the brief localised Austro-Prussian and Franco-German wars of 1866 and 1870. These campaigns, although already fought with modern national armies, cost so relatively little in men money, or

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civilian property that the damage was repaired within a few years, not only in the victor state but in the defeated one; and John Stuart Mill could plausibly argue that a war only effected in a year what would anyhow be replaced in a normal decade of industry and rebuilding. The daily life of the Western peoples was practically unaffected by *any* of these wars.

THE reality of this century of peace, and the unprecedented progress and prosperity which accompanied it, were obscured, in the period starting with 1918, by the wide currency of an elementary confusion between foreign policy and diplomatic negotiation; by an ill-informed attribution of the 1914 War to the diplomatic body; by the wishful thinking engendered by the League of Nations (without the co-operation of the United States); and by the misleading slogan of "collective security," which had no meaning after the natural failure to give it teeth in the Geneva Protocol in 1924, but which served to discredit the old and tested principle of the balance of power. This principle, in the mind of 19th century statesmen of all views, from Castlereagh and Metternich to Gladstone, simply meant the protection of the independence of small countries, and was the only practical alternative to imperialism. In so far as any individuals can be held responsible for the 1914 War, the chief blame must attach to the General Staffs, particularly the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff, Field-Marshal Conrad, who seems from 1906 onwards to have deliberately worked for a preventive war against Serbia and ultimately Russia. Bismarck, who said that he had found General Staffs very useful when he wanted to overcome his sovereign's reluctance to make war, but a nuisance when he did not want war, was himself overridden at times by the German General Staff—for example when they insisted on keeping Metz after the Franco-German war. The British people, without knowing it, were really fast-bound by General Staff and Admiralty undertakings to their French opposite numbers, which they had been building up since 1905, first without their Governments' authority and then with their general authorisation but with no knowledge of the details.

The popular delusion that the old diplomacy had been a cause of the Great War arose from a confusion of thought expressed in President Wilson's famous formula, "Open covenants, openly arrived at." This contained two propositions. The first was the legitimate though debatable one that treaties should be published as soon as concluded. It is debatable because if, for example, Bismarck had explained his far-reaching policies to his neighbours and had published all his engagements, he would probably not have created the German Empire; and the same applies to Richelieu or Cavour. I think myself, on balance, that it would have been better for humanity if all three had failed, and that the requirement under Article 18 of the old League Covenant that all treaties must be registered with the League Secretariat was about the only good result of the Versailles Conference. The secrecy of the old treaties and engagements was, however, the responsibility entirely of the politicians, and in no way that of the diplomatists.

The second proposition, that covenants should be "openly arrived at," was a strange decision on the part of the representative of a nation of businessmen, for what businessman would conduct all his operations in the full glare of publicity? Open diplomacy is a contradiction in terms; if it is open it is not diplomacy. The primary business of diplomacy is to achieve results by moderation, tact, and compromise when possible. The ambassador can and should influence the course of events by his reports to his Government and by his personal relations with the people with whom he is negotiating, but the broad lines of foreign policy should be settled by the governments. When the actual negotiation is carried out under a running fire of press comment and parliamentary discussion, every compromise is likely to involve loss of face by one party or the other, people strike attitudes from which they feel unable to depart, and this is an aspect which becomes far more important when the negotiation is carried on by a conference among politicians. In the 19th century, the diplomatists, backed by Foreign Ministers who both had leisure to think and were in the habit of frequently meeting each other, not in spectacular

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conferences, but during holiday visits to spas and watering places, played a major part in the conservation of the great peace of that era.

WHILE diplomacy of some sort has existed from early times, and there have been permanent Ambassadors and Ministers since the break-up of the European family of nations four centuries ago, the diplomatic body as a professional career service, with its own code of rules and conventions, was really a creation of the early 19th century. These men, as a class, spoke the same language (literally, in the shape of French); they shared a common code of behaviour, a common training; and because they got to know each other well, both at their posts and when they met again in other appointments, they developed a kind of common opinion about Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ambassadors who were tricky and unreliable. This common opinion, like the unwritten law of the fo'c'sle at sea, acted as a salutary check. Above all, their whole technique and professional pride lay in getting negotiations to run smoothly and politely; they usually developed a rather objective, sceptical outlook, and their professional tendency and their temperament made them, therefore, as a class, advocates of peaceful solutions. If you spend a lifetime in discussing with people of other countries, you acquire the habit of seeing the two sides which exist in so many questions, and this tends to create a sense of balance and measure in forming judgements, and above all an ingrained suspicion of all one-sided points of view. This, and the supreme need for patience, was what Talleyrand had in mind in his famous advice, "Above all, not too much zeal."

So, on the whole, the diplomatists acted quietly behind the scenes as a brake on the feverish nationalism released by the French Revolution, and on all the unreasoned fanaticism, self-righteousness, and popular hysteria which it engendered, and which Hitler and the Nazis so fatally exploited. Without going so far as Count D'Ormesson in speaking of them as the most civilised portion of mankind, one can fairly say that the diplomatist represented in a real sense the old cultural unity of Europe. Every profession has its "occupational maladies," and in the case of the old diplomatic body there was a tendency among the less efficient members to undue solemnity and the use of conventional clichés, as in the case of the diplomatic hack in Marcel Proust ("*C'est bien dans la manière du Ballplatz avec son éternel double-jeu!*")—but these were harmless mannerisms such as exist in all professional bodies, and more than offset by the relative absence of hypocrisy, intellectual dishonesty, or ruthless personal amibition.

The value of this professional *esprit de corps* stands out now in the contrast between the shrunken body of representatives of the free countries and the large separate bloc which represents the Soviet Empire and its satellites. Once, in Ankara, when we invited our Soviet colleagues to a reception for Turkish and diplomatic friends, two of them sought out a member of my staff whose family had belonged to the English colony in Tsarist Russia and who had lived there as a child, and asked her, "What is the national celebration for which this party is being given?" They were amazed to hear that it was just a friendly social gathering. At official parties the two diplomatic blocs tended to keep apart and limit their intercourse with their colleagues from the other camp to a formal exchange of "*Bonjours.*" Unfortunately, this is not a passing accident nor due to any personal incompatibilities; it is the result of a system which regards mankind as irreconcilably divided into two hostile camps, and which makes the representatives of the Soviet camp terrified of being suspected by their chiefs of being contaminated. It has led to negotiation being regarded as a kind of warfare, a matter of scoring points against the adversary. If Clausewitz thought that war was policy carried on by other means, so do the totalitarians regard peaceful negotiations as warfare carried on by other means—in fact "cold war." This is the exact reverse of the old diplomatic tradition, which assumed that negotiation must be a process of give and take, and that the only lasting agreements could be those which were genuinely accepted by both parties and left behind the minimum of resentment. The

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personal knowledge of foreigners and their reactions was of special advantage to the government of an insular country like Great Britain. Count Mensdorf, the Austrian Ambassador who stayed so long and was so popular in London before 1914, said that British politicians almost without exception had no clear idea about foreign conditions, and that they were "more ignorant, inexact, and amateurish than we believed." Clemenceau told King Edward VII at Marienbad, "Some of your public men are appallingly ignorant." Sir Harold Nicolson has summarised the characteristics of British politicians, so far as regards foreign affairs, as ignorance of foreign psychology (rather than of foreign conditions), unbounded optimism, dislike of facing unpleasant possibilities in advance, and a thirst for comforting agreements.

PUBLICITY not only makes concession on either side more difficult, but it may also easily excite public opinion by the ventilation of grievances and claims. The then head of the Swedish Foreign Office told me many years ago that the separation of Norway and Sweden might very easily have ended in war if at the time there had been a League of Nations with all the attendant publicity and recrimination before an international forum, and I venture to record as illustrations in this connection two small personal experiences which happen to remain in my mind. When I was in Buenos Aires in the middle of the last war, and the conservative Argentine Government was being incessantly attacked by the Opposition for their neutrality, I had to present for the record one of our periodical protests about Argentine encroachments in the Falkland Islands area. The Minister for Foreign Affairs could have obtained considerable credit and spiked the guns of his adversaries by making an incident out of it. Instead, I was able to obtain agreement that it was in the best interests of both parties that he should accept the protest as an academic one necessary to maintain our dossier in the event of an arbitration of the questions at issue. Some years later, when I was in Moscow, an English officer crash-landed in the Soviet Eastern zone of Germany and attempts on the part of the military authorities in Berlin to secure his release had failed. I was able to convince the Soviet Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs that His Majesty's Government really were precluded by tradition and principle from exchanging a Russian "defector" for the officer concerned, and, as the matter had not yet got into the press, the Soviet Government decided to return the officer. These are merely examples which could of course be paralleled in the experience of most diplomatists.

The crusade against "secret" diplomacy fell on particularly fertile soil in Britain as it fitted in with two national traditions: mistrust of foreigners and mistrust of professionals. British diplomatists in those days usually spent their whole careers abroad, and they were regarded as professionals who played a tortuous game beyond the comprehension of the plain man. When Torcy established in France in 1712 his short-lived Académie Politique for the training of diplomatists, Addison had immense fun with it in the *Spectator*, giving the qualifications of the various professors of the "opening and shutting of letters, political grimaces, indirect answers, cyphers, casuistry, and etiquette." In the United States, this inherited mistrust was exacerbated by a complex about Machiavellian British diplomacy, and contempt for their own professional service, expressed by one Congressman who, when the State Department appropriation was under discussion, referred to them as those "white-spat boys with the English accent."

It is to the credit of the English Governments throughout the 19th century, dominated as they were by a coalition of the great landowners, the great industrialists, and the middle classes, that they left so much responsibility to the British diplomatic body, recruited though it was mostly from the landed gentry. In stating the historical fact that a similar social background and personal means did create an international body of independent, balanced, and moderate men of the world with a common convention of international good manners and a common desire to reduce friction, I do not suggest that an efficient diplomatic body can only exist if it is recruited from a leisured class. The essential qualities of common sense, good manners, understanding of foreign mentalities,

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and precise expression can be ensured by a rigorous selection and training with these qualifications in view. The difficulty will lie in securing and retaining the personnel endowed with these qualifications if the Heads of Missions are treated by democratic governments as glorified postmen, their responsibility in the delicate art of negotiation confined to routine matters, with all important relations directly handled by politicians at public conferences under batteries of television cameras.

The tendency to side-track the career diplomatist was accelerated by the creation of a great number of new Embassies. Until well into my own time, the Ambassadors (corresponding to the new First Grade) became on appointment automatically Privy Counsellors; on the initiative of Sir Warren Fisher, this rule (which had already been departed from when the first Ambassador to Moscow was appointed) was abolished. It is doubtful whether, in the future, any Ambassador will feel free to take such a responsibility as, for example, did Sir Horace Rumbold when, as High Commissioner at Constantinople in September 1922, he refused to deliver an ultimatum to Ataturk, thereby averting a war without allies and enabling the Convention of Mudania to be made a fortnight later; just as Prince Schwarzenberg in November 1850, disregarded his instructions from Vienna in order to avert an Austro-Prussian war.

The general conclusion would seem to be that the general objectives of foreign policy should be open, but that the diplomatic negotiation by which it is carried out must remain secret.

I do not recollect having seen attention drawn to the fact that durng the 1914–1918 War the numerous abortive peace initiatives were almost always of completely "undemocratic" origin, and, even in the case of President Wilson, purely personal. Pope Benedict XV on August 1st, 1917, asked: "Is Europe so glorious and flourishing, to rush as though carried by universal folly to the abyss and work its own suicide?" And he proposed permanent arbitration and the reduction of armaments, the independence of Belgium, the reciprocal renunciation of war costs, and the settlement of territorial claims in consideration of the immense advantage of lasting peace with disarmament. During the same year Prince Sixte of Bourbon Parma, on behalf of the new Emperor Charles of Austria, offered to support the restitution to France of Alsace Lorraine, the restoration of Belgium, Serbian independence, and even of the Trentino to Italy. In November of that year Lord Lansdowne, an ex-Viceroy of India and an ex-Secretary of State, who had made the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the Entente Conventions, published in the *Daily Telegraph* his letter which *The Times*, then in the power of Lord Northcliffe, had refused to publish. In it he said: "We are not going to lose this war, but its prolongation will spell ruin for the civilised world and an infinite addition to the load of human suffering." In May 1918, Lansdowne was preparing a new letter at the same time as the Germans were endeavouring to start peace talks going at the Hague under cover of discussions of prisoners-of-war matters; both these facts became known to Lord Northcliffe who forestalled Lansdowne's new initiative by a sensational leader in the *Daily Mail* of June 18th, 1918, and the letter was never published.

I was on leave from France in England about that time and can well remember the universal consternation caused by Lansdowne's first letter. Looking back from our experience of the Second World War, itself a consequence of the prolongation of the First with its destruction of the German monarchy and middle classes, it seems the most elementary common sense. Most people would now agree that the actual earlier proposals of Pope Benedict XV were in themselves justified by events. The main point is that, with the exception of unreasoning sentimentalists who discredited their peace propaganda by their advocacy of "conscientious objection" to fighting, there was practically no popular support for the initiatives of these distinguished personages.

In two other ways democracy and nationalism were responsible for the prolongation of both wars. As Cambon pointed out, in proportion as democracy makes war more totalitarian, it makes it more difficult to stop. When wars

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were fought primarily for dynastic or commercial reasons with small professional armies, they could still be fought in accordance with the rules of the game, with a survival of the chivalrous spirit, and without working up a panic of hatred in the civilian populations; neither was it necessary for the whole population to be drawn into war industries in one way or another. One obvious consequence, therefore, of democratic or total war is that both sides draw the logical conclusion that the civilian population has no claim to immunity. This lesson, already acted on in the German submarine campaign during the First World War, was finally sanctioned when it was decided in London during the Second War to instruct the Bomber Command to focus operations on "the morale of the enemy civil population, in particular of the industrial workers," in other words to use the RAF for the deliberate destruction of whole residential districts.* The results in one city will stick in the memory of anyone who has read the late Lali Horstmann's *Nothing for Tears*. This decision by the most humane of governments may well rank among the decisive moments of history.

A less obvious consequence is that when a whole nation is at war, the war machine cannot be halted and switched on again easily. When in 1914 the German Government asked the Russian Government to stop the partial mobilisation they had begun, it was practically impossible to set the machine in reverse, and throughout the First World War Sir Henry Wilson and the General Staff were always haunted by the fear that the inception of any kind of negotiations would make it impossible to get the war going again. The mass hatred and prejudices raised by the First World War survived it and made it impossible to effect a permanent peace, while in the years immediately following the end of the Second they made it impossible to achieve any peace treaty at all!

ALL these considerations were totally disregarded by public opinion at the end of the 1914 War, and the old diplomacy, which had contributed so much to the hundred years' peace, and which had given fair warning to the respective Governments of the dangers ahead, was made the scapegoat. "The war to end war" had not even achieved a real peace treaty, but had inaugurated instead the epoch in which we are still living, the epoch on the one hand of an interminable series of theatrical spectacular "conferences," and on the other of attempts to maintain peace through the medium of world assemblies. This the writers of the 1930's called the "Wilsonian Epoch," and it is strange that even so experienced and balanced a judge as Monsieur Jusserand could write sincerely in 1934: "that humanity is progressing cannot be doubted"—and he said this in direct reference to the 1914 German Imperial gospel of force, inequality among nations, and the formula that necessity knows no law. He wrote those words at the very moment when Germany was already dominated by Hitler, that hysterical demoniac psychopath who incarnated the ruthless lust for power and destruction released in Germany from the depths of the collective unconscious by the First World War, by its disastrous end, and by the decade of chaos which followed Versailles.

The leaders of public opinion who inaugurated the Wilsonian epoch had been forced to notice the fatal results which had followed from the unlimited nationalism of the 19th century, but they increased the evil at Versailles by hastening the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had held together many "races" as a prosperous and civilised group of semi-autonomous cultures. It is often alleged that the break-up of Austria-Hungary was inevitable. This assumption ignores the fact that the Magyars had once been themselves

* Of course the decision was influenced by the fact that during 1942 and 1943 we had no other spectacular means of intervention to encourage the Russians and our own civilian population. I am not arguing for or against the decision in the circumstances, but it is important to note that it was a reversal of our announced policy of 1939 and that it set the seal of our approval on the logical conclusion of totalitarian war. This conclusion had not been previously accepted even by the Germans, who professed, e.g. in the bombing of Rotterdam and London in 1940, to be using air bombardment only as a military weapon, in preparation for an imminent invasion.

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"oppressed" by Austria as they in turn oppressed the Slavs, and that the murdered Archduke Francis Ferdinand's programme for associating the Slavs—converting the Dual Empire into a Triple Empire—was not essentially more unworkable than trilingual Switzerland or indeed the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. The hatred felt for him by the Slav Nationalists was itself a proof that they feared the success of his project; and the assumption that it could not have succeeded is based, not on the circumstances, but only on the fallacy that whatever has actually happened could not have taken any other course.

While thus greatly aggravating the evil of nationalism, the statesmen sought a remedy in the creation of a world assembly, and for the next twenty years international relations had to be made to fit nominally into what was called "the framework of the League of Nations." The League of Nations was built on sand, the shifting sand of unreality. It was unreal to suppose that over fifty nations, scattered all over the world, could have any common interests so concrete and positive as to induce them all to make real common sacrifices for the interests of any one of them. It was unreal to give equal voting rights to the smallest republic in Central America and to the United States and Great Britain. It was inevitable that such a loose collection of states should sort itself out in regional pressure-groups, Latin-American or Arab or those following French policy in Europe, and that these pressure groups should tend to follow the power which could be most useful to themselves.

Of course the League could do some effective work in non-controversial fields such as health or labour, but in the great issues of the period it acted as a will-o'-the-wisp, leading the peoples of the victorious alliance to substitute the essentially unreal formula of "collective security" for their own military security and the old—and for so long successful—principle of the balance of power. There is always a day of reckoning for those who put their trust in wishful thinking and comforting formulas, and in the case of the League the day of reckoning opened when its members voted for half-hearted sanctions against Italy in the hope of stopping the Italian occupation of Abyssinia. The United States was outside the League, and the leading powers in it had no intention of fighting, nor had they the means to do so. France, torn by domestic factions, bled by the loss of millions of young men whom the fallen birthrate had not replaced, had acquired a defensive mentality, pinned her faith on the Maginot Line, and had allowed her Air Force to become hopelessly obsolescent. The British Air Force, so formidable a few years later, still was largely in the blueprint stage; the British Fleet had ammunition for twenty minutes' fighting; the British Expeditionary Force was, relative to its opponent, inferior in equipment and fire-power to what it had been in 1914. Above all, the country had been subjected for a number of years to a wave of unreasoning woolly pacifism, and by one of those inconsistencies so frequent in popular thinking, the decision itself to embark on sanctions had been largely the result of the Fulham by-election which had been won by the Opposition with a majority of 18,000 on the sole issue of "warmongering." No one, therefore, was prepared to give the sanctions teeth by applying them to the supply of oil; Mussolini called the bluff; and the net result was that, while the conquest of Abyssinia was not impeded, the fascist régime in Italy was solidified and linked with Hitler.

At the first opportunity after the Second World War, the League conception was revived with a notable change. It was agreed that the principle of giving equal voting rights to all states had been a failure, and the Security Council was created with the right of veto. The United Nations Charter adopted at San Francisco on June 26th, 1945, was a better document than the original Charter of the League, and in the more civilised world of the 19th century it might well have succeeded in its object. The fatal flaw was the admission to the Security Council, with the right of veto, of a great power which had objectives completely in contrast to those of the other members.

The objectives of the United Nations as laid down in the Charter were in sum to maintain international peace and security, and by collective measures to remove threats to peace; to

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develop friendly international relations based on the principle of equal rights; to achieve international cooperation in solving problems of an economic or social character; and to promote respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms. The objectives laid down by Soviet doctrine were very different. It is the declared intent of the Soviet régime to foster by every means the internal contradictions among the non-Soviet powers with the object of hastening their disintegration and destruction. As regards promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the entire Soviet edifice is built precisely upon the negation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The late Mr. Vyshinsky stated on September 18th, 1947 that the policy of the Soviet Union in regard to the United Nations "is a policy of strengthening the organisation, broadening and strengthening international cooperation, of steady consistent observance of the Charter and of fulfilment of its principles." The factual commentary on this statement has been made in connection with the challenge that produced NATO but must be again amplified. Not merely were 55 resolutions of the Security Council turned down by the Soviet veto, but 11 special bodies created by UNO were boycotted from the start and 34 others occasionally. Not only have special UNO bodies been boycotted, but apparently competitive organisations have been set up, notably the famous Soviet-controlled "World Peace Council." The above quotation from Mr. Vyshinsky is a further reminder of how necessary it is to consider all statements addressed by Soviet officials to foreign audiences in relation to the terms of the basic doctrine. Mr. Attlee explained to the House of Commons in 1946 that it had been understood that the veto would be used "only in the last resort, in extreme cases when the great powers themselves might be involved in conflict. It was never conceived as a device to be used constantly whenever a particular power was not in full agreement with the others." When, however, the 55 vetoes during a certain period by the Soviet Government are analysed, it is found that the veto has been used always to prevent the discussion of problems in which the Soviet Union or any of her satellite countries are involved, and to prevent the admission of a dozen states as members, including Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Austria, Finland, and Ceylon.

THE other new factor which the Wilsonian epoch introduced in substitution for the old diplomatic system was the vogue for frequent theatrical international conferences. These have become so much a part of our way of life in the last 34 years that even when a "high level" conference has been admittedly a failure, it is often described as having fulfilled a useful purpose by clearing the air, clarifying the respective points of view, or merely as having been necessary in order to satisfy public opinion that "every avenue had been explored and no stone left unturned." The latter point is unfortunately true; but this fact, while justifying the governments, is discreditable to the public opinion which insists on the conferences. For a conference which cannot achieve any solid results is apt to raise exaggerated hopes, and to have some results prejudicial to whichever parties concerned are the most vulnerable to public opinion and therefore the most influenced by the desire for results of some kind. It also involves a grievous waste of time and energy by Ministers and their officials. In the days when Queen Victoria read all the more important despatches (written out by hand in the different posts of the world), the serious international problems were few and well known, only a few governments really mattered, or were even interested, in questions of high policy, and the main lines of foreign policy were apt to remain fairly constant over long periods of years and to be changed only after mature consideration. Today, serious and complicated issues arise almost daily in every part of the world; and in addition to this, the volume of normal business of all kinds has increased by thousands per cent, partly because of increased state interference everywhere. The frenzied tempo of work in the important Foreign Offices has therefore created a serious problem, in that the permanent officials, and the Ministers with their Parliamentary and other activities as well, have literally no time for quiet reflection. The loss of time and energy

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involved in an unsuccessful conference is therefore a serious matter.

The conclusion would seem to be that public opinion, instead of incessantly demanding new conferences, should insist that conferences should only be undertaken—as they generally were in the 19th century, and as in the case of the London Conference in October 1954—when there is some real prospect of success. The first condition for a successful conference is surely that all the parties should desire a real and permanent settlement, and that they should mean by this a settlement which would be definite, honest, and workable. In practice the satisfaction of these objectives really involves, first, a broad preliminary basic agreement; secondly, a genuine desire on both sides for such an agreement; thirdly, in order that no sense of injustice should remain, the weaker side must be given a fair hearing; fourthly, that the negotiations should be carried on in confidence, free from publicity and the attacks of pressure groups; fifthly, patience; and sixthly, that the terms of agreement when reached should be set down in a precise and unambiguous form. The traditional view was that until these conditions were fairly sure, it was best to leave negotiations to be carried on through diplomatic channels; conferences therefore were relatively few and far between, and a classic illustration is the Congress of Berlin of 1878, which only began after the British and Russian Governments had agreed on their minimum compromise terms. During the period of almost non-stop conferences inaugurated in 1919, the London Conference of 1925 accepted the Dawes Reparation Plan because Ramsay MacDonald and Herriot had agreed beforehand, and the Locarno Pact of 1925 followed on long secret negotiations between Stresemann and Briand and Lord D'Abernon. The London meeting in October 1954 referred to earlier, was a success because the Soviet Union was not a party to it and there was a general desire to meet the French objections to the defunct EDC. The Berlin Conference earlier in the year was bound to fail because the fundamental aims of the Western Powers and the Soviet Union in regard to Germany were completely opposed.

DURING the period between the wars these temporary conference successes stood out in melancholy contrast to the interminable naval disarmament conferences at Geneva or the abortive world economic conference of 1933, staged in the quite unreal hope of inducing the United States Government to wash out the British debt, but which failed spectacularly at the very outset to secure its nominal object of securing the reduction of the United States tariff. Its only result was to cause a marked deterioration in Anglo-American relations. Taken as a whole, the conferences between the two wars did nothing to stop the coming of the Second World War, and achieved no temporary results which could not have been equally effected through ordinary diplomatic channels. But they did from time to time seriously prejudice international relations, both Anglo-American and still more Anglo-French relations. If the British and French Governments were divided and morally paralysed at the crucial moment when Hitler, still unready and bluffing, marched into the Rhineland, one of the reasons was certainly not that there had been too few high-level conferences.

At Yalta and Potsdam in 1945, there was no fundamental agreement about anything, and in addition the parties concerned used words without attaching the same meaning to them. The Palais Rose conference of 1951 has become a proverbial joke; a conference of ministers' deputies actually sat for several months without even producing an agenda.

The situation has become much worse since 1945 in respect to one of the other conditions, namely, negotiation free from publicity and pressure. Although the conferences between the two wars were usually conducted in the glare of journalistic publicity, it was still admitted as regards day-to-day progress and results, if any, that the actual discussions were better kept as confidential as possible. With the prominent role assigned to the United States by history since the Second World War, the tremendous power of the American press has come into play and even the discussions are no longer inviolable. Not only is compromise without loss of face made almost impossible

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by this publicity; Ministers are under a constant temptation to strike attitudes and gain applause; and instead of discussing with each other, to address set speeches at the invisible millions.

If a real agreement is reached it is essential that it should be set down in exact and unambiguous terms; an ambiguous, loosely-worded treaty can cause far more harm than no treaty at all. I have agreed that the old Diplomacy may have tended to excessive formalism; but one of the characteristics of a well-trained diplomatist is certainly the habit of expressing what he wishes to say in clear and unambiguous language. While this habit of precise language is a necessary result of a good diplomatic training, it is by no means necessary to success in party politics, which are ruled by a completely different convention. No one expects a government to stick literally or even in substance to its previous declarations when in opposition, and consistency even over a short term is regarded as the weakness of static minds. Even sixty years ago, when Parliament was a real governing body and a serious debating society, Lord Salisbury preferred foreign affairs because they were "sincere," whereas, as Lady Gwendolyn Cecil says in her biography, "in home politics phrases ruled." Therefore, when the spectacular publicity-ridden type of conference becomes the vehicle for the settlement of all importance international issues, the inevitable tendency is to try to achieve quick results by finding soothing formulas which leave the future to look after itself. Another danger of this type of conference is that its success or failure may easily become entangled with the political status and future of the individual Ministers taking part. The disarmament conference of 1932, for example, was hampered by the fall of Laval on a franchise reform bill, by a German presidential election and a Prussian general election, by a general election in France and a presidential election in the United States.

THE essence of the foregoing may be stated briefly as follows. Throughout most of the long peace following the Vienna Conference, only the middle classes, in Europe as in England, were normally interested in foreign affairs. The Governments which represented them were chiefly interested in maintaining peace and the balance of power, and were much influenced and checked by the freemasonry of the Monarchs International and the old diplomatic corps. International conferences were only held at intervals to formulate decisions already basically agreed upon: they were conducted in confidence and were relatively little influenced by popular pressure. Since the 1914 War, the principle of the balance of power and of states with common interests working together was replaced by the idea of a World Assembly and the unreal formula of collective security; and the old methods of diplomacy were replaced in the most important matters by an endless series of spectacular conferences, for the most part inadequately prepared and since the Second World War practically conducted in public. In foreign affairs democratic opinion is necessarily apt to be uninformed, and is easier to mobilise either in the sense of xenophobia ("'Ere's a foreigner. Let's 'eave 'alf a brick at 'im!") or of reckless and unreasoning pacifism. Frequently the two contradictory attitudes are mixed up, as when the Labour Party not long ago "voted in one week in favour of the rearmament of Germany and the disarmament of England." A successful conference is one which results in a definite, clear, and workable agreement which the parties are certain that later governments will have the will and the power to enforce and which (if there is a losing side) the losers accept as natural and tolerable.

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Emily Hahn

In Fear of Gadgets

TO THE American who lives in Europe, or anyway to me—and never mind these generalised disguises—America at first sight after a long absence seems outrageously like the European idea of her. She is lavish, generous, and wasteful, and it took me fully two weeks to get over thinking of all that as being somehow wrong. Then early training reasserted itself. I sat back and relaxed. Merely because I was in the States, I felt rich: I felt euphoric, and I knew that this was somehow right. I stopped gasping at the price of food, or rather, I stopped gasping in the European fashion, though I still commented on it. When Americans squawk at the cost of things, they do it cheerfully, as if all this were only to be expected, after all. Europeans are different. They are genuinely frightened by expenditure and they don't care who knows it. One of the ways this shows up is in tipping. An Englishman or a Frenchman never havers about tipping; he makes a lightning calculation, comes to a decision, and hands over what he has settled on in his mind. But Americans are never sure, and they overtip out of sheer nervousness, and worry about it afterwards. Then they say to themselves, why not? What does it matter? Money's made to be used.

I came to the same conclusion after those first two weeks. It didn't take long to slough off the caution I had learned in Europe. I am lamentably adaptable. But then, so is anybody who comes to America.

Another thing people drop in the process of re-Americanisation is that biting jealousy that tends to underlie social life in Europe. It's rather strange, when you come to think of it, that the countries which have adopted a more socialist form of society should show this emotion more strongly than the land where everyone loudly sings the glories of competition. Theoretically speaking, jealousy ought to be the outstanding mental malady of the States, but it isn't. In America everyone gaily assumes that we're all going to make money; this year, and next year, and the year after that. The Englishman is gloomily certain that he won't make much this year, and he's likely to make even less in the future. Therefore he hangs on determinedly to whatever he has already got. You never can tell. There may be a depression, or he might have a stroke, or they'll raise the income tax again. In spite of my adaptability I was startled when an American of sixty-five said to me when he was showing me around the house: "I've got it just about the way I like it now. There's only one more thing I'd like to put in; an ornamental lake. Didn't have enough money for that this year, but as soon as I get it, this place'll look really nice."

The Old World preoccupation with old-age pensions and all that recedes. It's not the sort of caution you can develop in American air. As I said, I went along merrily enough, but there was another kind of recklessness I simply couldn't achieve, and I don't think I ever will. I cannot get used to the way everybody depends on machines.

I knew about cars already. Even before I ever went away I had found it rather difficult to

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indulge my fondness for walking. But never in the old days was the American quite so inseparable from his steering-wheel as he is now. In fairness I must say that it's still possible to walk quite a lot in New York. It's not only possible; it's necessary. During the Christmas rush, when I couldn't get on a bus and knew a taxi would never get me there on time, I walked from Washington Square, which is at 4th Street, up to 38th Street for lunch, and after lunch I walked on to 61st Street. It didn't take very long, really. But out in Winnetka, in the Middle West, it's different. Like the other towns of Illinois and thereabouts, Winnetka seems to have been built for people who use their cars for everything, and I mean everything. Quite often except for the shopping district, there aren't any sidewalks at all. Even when there are, you seldom see people using them. Sometimes you can find little boys running around erratically, throwing footballs at each other. Now and then a harried young woman pushes a baby-carriage across the road. Tiny tots pull carts around, or try out their roller-skates. But solid consecutive walking has gone out of style.

IN WINNETKA things have reached such an extreme that there's no provision for local public transport. There are no buses and no street-cars. Everybody is assumed to be a car-owner, and while I was there everyone except me seemed to be one. I suppose there must have been people who lived right in the middle of the town, within easy tottering distance of the store and the railway station, who managed to get along without automobiles, but I didn't meet any. I was living some miles away from all that, like a jellyfish stranded on the beach. I waited every day until my sister had occasion to go out, or some friend could come and pick me up and take me to where I had to go. I couldn't even step out to mail a letter, because they are so dependent on their cars in Winnetka that there is no mailbox in the district: you drive to the post-office if you have to send a letter off after the mailman's daily visit. At least in the English countryside you would have a bus. There, in the heart of the luxury quarter of the North Shore, I felt underprivileged.

Every morning in our family we planned the transport pattern for the day. It was like a campaign. "I'll pick you up at three and we'll take Mother downtown to the dentist. While she's there, better shop round and see if you can find that dress you saw at Field's. I'll do the marketing while you're looking; there's an A. and P. on the corner where I can cash a cheque while I'm at it. But unless the dentist doesn't have to do much to Mother we won't be able to meet Lucy at the station on time. I'll tell her to wait for us until we get there. Jenny promised to take the cleaning-woman over to the station and she'll pick up Al on her way back. Thank goodness we don't have to worry about getting Barbara over to Hubbard Woods because Letitia's already done it on her way to work."

None of these masterly arrangements could possibly be made without the help of the telephone. That is constantly in use. Dates are made and broken and made again, arguments are carried on, expeditions mapped out, emergencies discussed and coped with. War is declared and peace made, all on the telephone. With car and phone you can do anything in the Midwest; without them you could die of a stroke or starve to death, quite powerless to save yourself. Certainly you couldn't mail a letter.

That is only the beginning of the story. The mechanisation of the great Middle West goes much further than such old-fashioned inventions as motor-cars and telephones. I won't stretch the truth by saying that every well-appointed house out there has air-conditioning, because as you go north you find the inhabitants have been slow to seize the chance to improve themselves in this particular way. It is only down in Mississippi and Louisiana and Missouri that they are building central-conditioning plants in the new houses as a matter of course, having learned to scorn the ordinary single unit that cools only one room at a time. On all other electrically-driven equipment, however, the Middle West is so up to date that a visitor from the Atlantic seaboard is himself surprised. The impact on a European resident is simply terrifying. I asked myself all the time, what possessed these people? Didn't they

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know anything about electricity cuts? Suppose their generating centres should be bombed, what then?

I also wondered what happens when all that stuff goes out of date, as presumably it is constantly doing. Good Americans are keenly anxious to keep up with the times. They are usually ashamed of old-model cars, and they keep their chariots as presentable as possible. One of my friends apologised profusely for her car, and she apologised even more for leaving it in a downtown parking lot where its comparatively sober and nicked appearance contrasted sharply with the gleaming Easter-egg hues of its neighbours. Still, it looked to me like a pretty good car, and I said so. It was as good as nine out of the ten cars you would see anywhere in England, I said. I failed to comfort her.

"I'll just have to get rid of it," she said. "It's not doing me any good being seen in it, and the parking people hate having it around."

This didn't surprise me—it's an old story even to me—but the rest of the picture did. Television sets, for instance. If I should ever own one, which seems unlikely, I am certainly not going to turn it in soon after I buy it in exchange for a newer model. I'm not that restless. But my friends at home are. They are kept well up to the mark by the television manufacturers. Time after time during a programme I was implored by a photogenic young man to turn in my old set and take home a new one.

"Your neighbourhood dealer will pay you at least one hundred dollars for your old set," he said impressively. "Remember, folks, no matter how old it may be, no matter what make it is, we are prepared to offer you a rock-bottom price of one hundred dollars credit on this beautiful new set, a welcome adornment to any room."

I was worried on his behalf. What on earth was he going to do with all those second-hand television sets after he had got them? I began asking around, but none of my acquaintances could tell me, and they were surprised that I should bother. Years ago, before I ever thought of living in England, I had a similar experience; worrying about what the dentist did with the old gold fillings he took out of people's teeth when he replaced them with new ones. Anyway, he didn't give me credit for what precious metal he took out of *my* teeth. When I spoke of this, people said I was ridiculous. They implied I was being miserly and un-American. (Obviously I was merely already sympathetic to the British way of life: in Britain they *do* give you credit for your old fillings.) Patient research on the TV problem, however, brought its reward at last. I met a man in the business who was willing to talk.

"It's just a method of giving a discount without saying it's a discount," he explained. "If you wanted to play it some other way you'd still be able to get a new set for a hundred less than the list price, and you wouldn't necessarily have to turn in your old set, either. The fact is, the general market on television is low at the moment. I can remember when you'd see three, four stores opened up in every shopping centre in this state, selling television sets, nothing else. Now most of them have closed down. Fact is, you can't carry a store on TV alone; you've got to put in stoves or washing-machines or something practical like that, to ride along on between the booms. There's a slight TV boom of a sort going on right now, as a matter of fact; people who have tiny screens want the new big ones. I guess they'll listen to the come-on ads all right, and turn 'em in, and get their discount." He paused, brooding over the intricacies of commerce, of demand and supply. He had forgotten my first question, and started a little when I repeated it. "The old stuff? God knows what they do with it. Scrap it, I guess; it's all you could do."

TELEVISION commercials on the other necessities of Middle-west life, the electric kitchen ranges, and refrigerators and things, are not quite so coaxing, and I saw no offers of discount on them, direct or otherwise. For some reason, manufacturers don't seem hopeful about persuading the public to make quick turnovers on kitchen equipment, but you have problems just the same when it comes to picking out what you want. There's the same rich variety, the ever-changing design, the brave array of chromium buttons and illuminated arrows and such gadgets. Faced with the

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gleaming dashboard of my sister's electric range, I felt just as helpless as I do when I'm asked to take a picture with a modern camera. I have strong sympathy with a young matron I know who tried to cook a big family dinner on her new stove, the day it was installed.

"I did everything they told me to in the directions," she said indignantly. "I put the turkey in the oven and set the clock and the temperature and all the other things, and then we went out to the movies. The book said we could. And when we got back, nothing had happened. The stove was still stone-cold. Well, I called up the servicing man, and he came out and looked at it, and he told me I hadn't turned it on, that was all. I said turning on wasn't in the directions. He seemed to think I was dumb. All I can say is, they've got no right to assume that a modern housewife would know enough to do that, either, without being told."

In the field of the deep freeze, the selling psychologists have been alternately cunning and stupid. Here I found myself immune from envy or desire. Whatever could be the use of a deep freeze in England? Secure in scientific disinterestedness, I explored the world of freeze. At first, it seems, Americans bought freezers lavishly. In most reasonably prosperous households you saw the glittering white coffers taking up a disproportionate amount of space in kitchen or pantry. There was a lot of talk about them, and a lot of activity too. I remember in the early days being puzzled—I was in the States at the time—by a woman who had started out by filling her deep freeze with supplies, among which were a dozen blueberry pies. We had one for lunch one day, and it was awfully good. I could hardly believe it had been frozen. A few minutes after we'd finished our coffee she stirred restlessly and finally stood up.

"Got to get busy," she said apologetically. "Come into the kitchen while I bake, will you? I have to replace that pie."

I said, "You mean, every time you eat a blueberry pie out of the freezer you bake another one and put it in?"

"Naturally," she said coldly. "That's the whole idea of a deep freeze, isn't it? You want to keep a reserve."

Well, the early frenzy of those days, I observe, has worn off. People are managing more happily with the little freezing units that come all ready for use as part of the new-style refrigerators. But the manufacturers of big freezers have not given up. They are still right in there, pitching. There is a new idea in the air—literally in the air; you can hear about it on the radio and see it on TV—called the Deep Freeze Club, or something like that. If you join one of these clubs and promise to buy club meat and vegetables and cakes and things, the club headquarters gives you a deep freeze absolutely free. All you've got to do is keep it filled with those special foodstuffs. Perhaps that's a hidden discount; perhaps it isn't. Obviously *somebody* gets something out of it.

If I lived in a properly electrified Middlewest house I might get used to it in time, but it would take a long time, much more than the few weeks I spent in Winnetka. While I was there I kept having nightmares, dreaming that somebody came along and took away the electricity. Once a mysterious voice said, "This is all out of date; we use atomic energy now. Scrap the lot. Turn it in on our new exchange scheme." I woke up; it was about three in the morning, and a mysterious voice was actually talking. It took me a minute to realise it was the hot-water boiler. But then something is constantly humming or churning or purring in the houses of Illinois: domesticity is as industrialised nowadays as a factory.

My sister's house is probably as up-to-date a one as you are likely to find in that locality. It is generally admired. I used to stand there in the kitchen and check up mentally on what was going on around me behind all the gleaming white enamel. Of course there were the obvious things that I remembered from the old days; there were the radio and the iron and the toaster—though the toaster, as a matter of fact, was far from obvious. It scared me a little. I was used to the kind that merely toasts bread when you put it in; I had learned to cope with the pop-up sort. But this toaster goes beyond such simple devices; it is evilly quiet and intelligent. You put your bread into a slot on top, where it sits for a moment, remaining

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half-visible. Then, without so much as a click, it slowly sinks out of sight. In due course it rises again, still silently, now completely brown.

My sister has a refrigerator with a deep-freeze unit. She has a central-heating gadget and a hot-water gadget, each with its own song. These noises and that of the refrigerator aren't very loud, not as loud as the washing-machine, nor can they be compared with the sinister, swishing voice of the electric dryer, where a couple of paddles drag the clothes around and around in a little steel cell. A shriller note is sometimes contributed by the ventilation fan in the ceiling, just above the stove. None of this interferes with television programmes. They're going on upstairs in the Television Room, in privacy.

The dish-washer has a song of different pitch. It sounds terribly efficient, and it looks efficient too, with its ruby red eye glowing all the while it works. Suddenly there is a click, and song and red glow die off together. Nothing is heard after that, probably, but the steady hum of the fridge.

I MADE pretty good progress. I got used to all these things and learned to take them in my stride; everything in the kitchen except the garbage disposal gadget. It was my sister's latest acquisition and her greatest pride. To some extent I could understand her sentiments. I didn't love the Disposall, but it fascinated me. It was a contraption in the sink that looked like a perfectly ordinary piece of plumbing, a removable, perforated vent above the waste-pipe. It behaved like an ordinary vent, too, until you gave it a certain twist. Then there came a most alarming, grinding, chomping sort of noise from underneath it: it was chewing. When you wanted to use it, you lifted the thing off and poured all your waste down into the little steel chamber beneath. Then you closed it and twisted it and turned on the cold water and listened to the grinding, and the next time you peered into the steel cell, it was empty.

I hung around the sink, studying the Disposall. I couldn't tear myself away. I put in apple peelings, and the middles of oranges, and old bread, now and then pausing to check up once again with my sister: "Do you mean I put in everything? Absolutely everything?"

"Almost everything," she said. "The last time the servicing man came, he said we weren't working it hard enough. He said it likes beef-bones. I told him I simply can't afford to feed it beef-bones very often. It's got to manage with lamb-bones or chicken, that's all."

I paused with a plate of broken bits, hovering over the sink. "Chicken-bones! Honestly?" I said.

"Oh yes, put it in," said my sister placidly. "There are only a few things it can't digest —fibrous things like toothpicks, and celery, and artichoke. Ready?"

She fastened down the vent and twisted it, and turned on the water. The grinding noise began. The house shook on its foundations. All other mechanical noises were drowned, though the boiler was working, and the washing was being done, and the refrigerator gave tongue in its cheerful way.

"That's enough," said my sister. She turned off the water and the din subsided. She untwisted the vent and lifted it out, and peered down into the orifice. "Now then," she said, "you can see for yourself. Everything is gone except for a little fibrous stuff over there in the corner—celery or something. Get it out, will you?"

I recoiled. "I wouldn't put my hand in there for anything," I said.

The clothes-dryer hummed, jeering at me.

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Hilary Corke

The Bad Old Style

"From Toreador to Sacred Cow"

THE war is ten years over, and here is a brand-new book of poems from New York. It begins:

> *To Tiberius the aura of the hot basin, of towels and oils was like the whiteness of flamingoes, and it was here he brought a book of poems and a small revolver, holding Hindu rivers in his eyes and virgin bodies yielding to——*

"Oh Lord, the bad old style!"

"What on earth do you mean, sir, 'the bad old style'? I would have you know that this poem is an *avant-garde* poem. . . ."

"*Avant-garde*, indeed!"

"Certainly. Just pass me the book a minute. I know I saw . . . ah! here we are, last page of the blurb. Ahem! 'He is the only younger poet that I know of who in spirit has the promise of a new and unpredictable *avant-garde* in America.'"

"My dear old fellow, there is nothing so absolutely finally ineffably and irretrievably *rear* as the *avant-garde* of an army in retreat. The outlines of the geography of post-war poetry are beginning to make themselves at last tolerably clear, especially when seen against the background of the period immediately preceding. The poetry (and indeed the painting and music) of the twenties and thirties pursued one ideal *par excellence*, Intensity. What is their classic definition of poetry? 'Language charged with meaning to the highest possible degree.' Maximum intensity, maximum content, maximum area of reference, and (necessarily) maximum degree of ambiguity. Minimum length."

"And why not? If the full poetic 'meaning' *can* be expressed in five lines, then it *must* be expressed in five lines, and not in fifty."

"That, if I may say so, is no more than an article of faith, though it is always stated as flatly as an axiom. *Why* must it be in five lines, and not in fifty? It is claimed (I believe) that Mr. Eliot's *Waste Land* has 'epic content'; that he has stated as much or more in his 400 lines as Homer in his 40,000. It may be so. However, I find at least one epic quality lacking."

"And what is that, pray?"

"Epic length. The one thing that can *never* be expressed in five lines is 'fifty-line-ishness.' This is not a mere quibble: it is only the literary equivalent of what is known to engineers as 'the model fallacy' and to architects as 'the absolute value of scale.' But an unreal and tendentious brevity is only one of the necessary resultants of the desire and pursuit of the intense. Surveying five hundred years of English poetry in search of this philosopher's stone, the poets of the inter-war decades found it, comparatively pure in a few 'ancestors' like Donne, but for the most part sadly thin and scattered. A 'classic' author like Chaucer or Pope was, from their point of view, so low in bullion content as to be hardly worth the working. Even in Shakespeare the ore was no more than sporadic; nevertheless, there was matter to be extracted here. The less gifted writers went about it in a manner that may seem from this

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vantage-point a little naïve: they seem to have thought, what an excellent poem that amateur Shakespeare might have written if only he had had the sense to string his 'beauties' (that is, his intensities) closely together instead of separating them out with low-tension trivialities. Our poems, they said (when we write them) will consist of *Nothing but Beauties*! They did not pause to consider that the 'intense' passages of Shakespeare, and other 'primitive' writers, become so primarily in virtue of their settings in matter of less urgent concern, acting as nodal or focal points for the whole, their peculiar force depending less upon their own intrinsic contents than upon the manner in which they are employed to sum up or to anticipate all that more humdrum matter that is gone or to come.

"These would-be-intense poets then inspected their Beauties a little more closely to determine their outward form: it was clear that in many cases (though by no means in all) the language at such points becomes clogged, thick, and obscure, that the primary surface-meaning frequently vanishes, leaving only a dark forest of undertone and implication. 'The intense is evidently obscure,' they cried, 'and thus it follows as the night the day, that the obscure is intense.' Here, apart from the appallingly obvious principal one, I believe they fall into two additional errors. In the first place the intense is by no means necessarily obscure: in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, for instance, the Egyptian's great lament for Anthony is certainly stated with a measure of primary obscurity—

Oh wither'd is the Garland of the Warre,
The Souldiers pole is falne—

yet there are moments of greater intensity to follow:

Husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my Title!

and

Peace, peace:
Dost thou not see my Baby at my breast,
That suckes the Nurse asleepe?

neither of which is the least obscure in phrasing. These take their force entirely from the context: 'Husband, I come'!—what three words could be more deeply charged with meaning in view of all the tragedy of extra-marital love that has gone before? Secondly, where there *is* obscurity, it (like the intensity) takes its force largely by contrast from the intelligibility in which it is set. So there is not a discord in modern music which (making allowances for a more limited orchestration) is not to be found in Bach: but the point of departure for the contemporary composer is the point of arrival for Bach, whose discord is the ultimate and terrifying terminus of harmonic remoteness inexorably approached from an initial simplicity—a simplicity to which he will just as inevitably lead the ear again."

"But surely you do not suggest that Mr. Eliot, Mr. Auden, Mr. Spender——"

"Good heavens, *no*! I am not talking of the masters but of the school, the dear old porpoises. . . . *So* (to return to Tiberius, whom we have all this time left in what would appear to be a decidedly awkward situation during our own trip into harmonic remoteness), we find the *external* characteristics of certain 'intense' passages in Shakespeare and other writers being slavishly reproduced in the hope of producing at least the *effect* of a depth and content that may or may not be there. Notice how every line after the first in this poem is split after its least important word, a characteristic of late 'Jacobethan' tragedy."

"Why not here, then?"

"Why, for the very good reason that here the lines obey no metric: they haven't the same number of 'feet,' they haven't the same number of syllables, they haven't the same number of stresses, nor do they fall into any recognisable pattern of any of those things—dividing them in this manner is designed to give an impression of extreme finesse, subtlety, and balance, whereas they are in truth unbalanced and lawless. It is vulgar pretentiousness of the first water. Ugh!"

"Come, you are being a little hard!"

"I am not. No words could be too hard for it. To fake profundity, to ape the 'canons of giant art'—what is absolutely intolerable about it is the deception practised upon the innocent

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or unwary reader. It is as immoral as selling adulterated groceries; it betrays the very 'name and nature of poetry.' And how about 'the whiteness of flamingoes,' while we are about it? Not content with splitting 'white-ness' in the middle, the fellow has to ascribe it to *flamingoes—flamingoes*, I ask you!"

"Perhaps they *have* white flamingoes in America?"

"Not in my America. If one had other reasons to trust this poet, 'the whiteness of flamingoes' would mean 'something that does not exist,' like 'the bashfulness of critics': but one has no such reasons. I say, it is the *bad old style*!"

"Bad or not, but hardly *old*. Surely it is a highly contemporary style, something very much of the moment?"

"Dead as mutton, my dear old fellow, I can assure you: why, good heavens! they are teaching it in the schools and universities!"

"I see. But what then has come to replace it?"

"You invite garrulity. However. The position, as I see it, is roughly this. The past ten years, at any rate in England, have witnessed something of a revolution: the poems that appear in our periodicals, for instance, are now usually fairly rigid in form and fairly clear in content, a decided reversal of between-war practice. They tend to rhyme and to use full-stops and commas: try that on a thirties editor and hear his indignant rejection—'Rhymes? *Commas*? Old-fashioned stuff!' The magnitude of this revolution, however, is obscured, first by the fact that there are no new big convenient names to bandy, secondly that it is inevitably in the nature of a retreat into territory that has been, at any rate superficially, occupied before. It has no news value: reaction always gets a poor press compared with the headlines of action.

"These new 'formalists' fall into two groups. The first is a small homogeneous body, a 'school,' known generally as 'the Empsonians.' How far Mr. Empson is gratified by this, I cannot say. The recipe for this type of poetry is simple. Read five hundred lines of Dryden until you have the 'noble frank and manly' rhythm pat; choose any theme more proper to critical prose; garnish with two chic philosophical terms, three classical references (*minor* writers, please!) and half a dozen rather naughty ones; deluge in an *espagnole* of Total Knowingness, and serve up in *villanelle* or *terza rima*. This style is particularly affected by the youngest writers: about half of *Oxford Poetry 1954* (Fantasy Press. 5s.) is given up to it, and the results (though creatures of a sort of sterile headachy pseudo-intellectual heat) are not wholly without their amusing moments. It is the pretentiousness that is the chief drawback; only those who know *very* little could think it worth while pretending to know *quite* so much. And they have a most uningratiating habit of saying 'we' when they mean 'I'; thus Mr. George Macbeth:

> *'No acts performed in fact have been*
> *Rehearsed upon a private stage*
> *Inside the head.' We know you mean:*
> *What bunch of nerves has come of age*
> *To play the ghost in the machine?*

"We don't, you know! We don't for a moment. The same poet provides plenty of examples of the 'Empsonian' movement at its most characteristic and its most absurd:

Shy maids may blush who whisk suspenders up

or

So Kant was right. What flirt would be discreet,
Or spoil a likely romp by shamming coy?

And here is Mr. Jonathan Price:

Small men make love on stilts, and hold their poise.

"It will be seen that it is unnecessary to invent parodies of this style. Nevertheless it has this importance: that here is a group of young poets (not only at Oxford but widely spread over the country) who feel sufficiently dissatisfied with the bad old style to band together in that most un-English thing, a school, and (what is more) attempt to establish what our poetry has not known for close on 200 years, a universal metre. No doubt, believing that every metaphysical age must be succeeded by an Augustan, each hopes to become the 20th century Pope, where the most he can hope for is to become the 20th century Edmund Waller (the position of the 20th century John Waller

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being already adequately occupied): nevertheless *Oxford Poetry 1954* is a more vigorous and stimulating little collection than has come out of a University for quite a long time and should be read widely, both for its Empsonian and for its other contributors."

"Ah, 'the others.' And who, pray, are the others?"

"Here I cannot characterise. They form no coherent group at all; they are merely all those who write simply and plainly in more or less traditional forms. On the whole they tend to be in their thirties or forties—and some of them are considerably older. In many cases they have been writing in this way, unheard, unread, unpublished, through the lean years, waiting for the wind of public opinion to blow their way. Some indeed are pure Georgians, already popular once in their youth and subsequently eclipsed, now come back to make an Indian summer. Such is the speed of contemporary movement and counter-movement. It is sometimes quite confusing: for instance, opening the *Collected Poems* of Frances Cornford (The Cresset Press. 10s. 6d.) and coming upon a *villanelle*, I exclaimed 'Good heavens! Fancy Mrs. Cornford going all Empsonian!', until I observed it was from a 1923 collection."

"Aha! the Bad Old Style before last!"

"You may choose to think so:

Your youth is like a water-wetted stone,
A pebble by the living sea made rare,
Bright with a beauty that is not its own. . . .

"Certainly you will find little that is 'intense' about Mrs. Cornford's collection. What you *will* find is the simple, the innocent, the lyrical, the 'singing voice.' There is abounding quiet intelligence but nothing that smacks of intellectualism—no 'acrostics,' no esoteric allusions; there is not a line that fails to yield a meaning on a first perusal."

"Milk-and-water stuff."

"No, straight milk, I should say. Yours, I know, is a straight whisky; excellent for passionate moments, but milk is the better basic diet. One can sit down and *read* Mrs. Cornford."

"And can one not sit down and read Dylan Thomas?"

"I am afraid I have rather improper visions of that process. I see the young wife, advanced in a suburban way, still sporting her poodle-cut and keen on the ballet, who has taken the *Collected Poems* out of her local library on the strength of having heard the broadcast of *Under Milk Wood* ('jolly rural and sexy'). She opens it at random and reads aloud:

Half of the fellow father as he doubles
His sea-sucked Adam in the hollow hulk,
Half of the fellow mother as she dabbles
Tomorrow's diver in her horny milk,
Bisected shadows on the thunder's bone
Bolt for the salt unborn.

"And her husband looks up from his *Evening Standard* and says 'How many letters?'

"Now that young woman, if her taste has not been wholly vitiated by too much yearning for 'modernity,' can sit down and read Mrs. Cornford straight through and arise a happier and a wiser young woman."

"Oh well, if you begin to talk of the Common Reader. . . ."

"Precisely I talk of the Common Reader: this ultimately is *his* revolution. Consumer demand. Here is a poem of Mrs. Cornford's called *On the Cliff*; like almost everything else in this volume it is short, well-made, and crystal-clear:

O sky, grass, earth!
How calm it is to lie
Stretched here, unloved, unhated,
By your complete indifference reproved.

But earth, grass, sky,
Were we not once by birth
Closely related?

Unquiet creature, No!
Cousins perhaps, yet very long ago
And many, many, many times removed.

"Now this poem (which is entirely representative) is addressed essentially to the Common Reader, is it not?"

"I see that the last poem in the book is addressed essentially to you, dear boy! It is called *Epitaph for a Reviewer*:

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Whoso maintains that I am humbled now
(Who wait the Awful Day) is still a liar;
I hope to meet my Maker brow to brow
And find my own the higher."

"I shall bear it in mind. But Mrs. Cornford is not in the least an isolated example. On the contrary; as you see, my table is piled high with newly published verse, and most of it of this post-war 'formalist' nature. Indeed, I am amused to hear certain writers and critics of the thirties, now somewhat 'cast high and dry above the waves' wide roar,' proclaiming that Poetry is dead: they are referring an interior to an exterior condition, I think, rather in the vein of the gentleman who announced that

There's something the matter wi' Glesgae,
For it's gaein' roun' and roun'.

"Here is Miss Sheila Wingfield's *A Kite's Dinner* (The Cresset Press. 9s. 6d.) (the choice of the Poetry Book Society). Miss Wingfield is much more of a 'learned lady' than Mrs. Cornford. I feel (quite erroneously, I dare say) that much of her verse has been composed in women's college libraries, an illuminated MS. propped on the lectern before her, reilluminated in the strong spring sunlight pouring through the leaves of the lime-tree at the window; it would be, at any rate, in a good renaissance tradition. She is as concerned to be clear as Mrs. Cornford, but she is writing about very much more complicated matters and she has to employ quite a lot of poetical shorthand to express her meaning. Here is a poem that I liked particularly, *While Satyrs Hunted for a Nymph*:

While satyrs hunted for a nymph
As we for strawberries in a wood,
Philosophers, their blood and lymph
Excited by the search for Good,

Found Cause in Space; and tracked Despair
In Time; felt human Destiny
And Reason swaying in the air
Like a bee-tumbled peony;

Perceived (but never told their School)
Truth transparent as a shrimp
Darting backwards in a pool;
And Thought with all its tendons limp.
They are gone. Their counter-pleas
Of proof have left us, every one,
Like sailors thirsting for a breeze—
And still the breeze drops with the sun.

"But I must not give you the impression that Miss Wingfield is an abstract or cerebral writer. On the contrary, she can be simple, sensuous and passionate with the best of them; but she tends to look upon the splendours and miseries of life with one eye that of a scholar and the other that of mercifully ineducable woman. It is a creative combination, and Miss Wingfield seems to me a poet of very considerable promise and achievement.

"I COULD add a great many names to Miss Wingfield's, but I doubt if you have the patience, and I certainly have not the space, to discuss more than two or three of them, and that unfairly briefly. There are the *Poems* of Ivor Gurney (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.), the insane Georgian poet and musician who died so long ago as 1937 with no more than a couple of very slim war-time volumes to his name; now a selection of his unpublished work has been issued, with an introductory memoir by Edmund Blunden. The long delay is, I think, significant; if these poems had been brought to the light of day even a few years ago, it is to be doubted whether they could have found any sort of an audience. The position is very different now: indeed I think we shall probably see quite a number of unpublished or forgotten Georgians brought out for our consideration within the next few years—the recent collection of Charlotte Mew's work was a notable example. It is extremely difficult to give a brief characterisation of Gurney's poetry. He seldom succeeds in rounding out and completing an individual poem—the organising part of his mind is too blurred for that; but the texture and detail is undoubtedly that of a man who had it in him to become a considerable writer, if mental illness had not decreed otherwise. He is typical of a certain sort of English poet, strong, obsessed, 'inspirational,' invincibly insular and invincibly amateur, writing verse as if it had never been written before, but using

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these limitations as a strength, and carving out a strongly individual (though minor) territory of his own. Whatever the subject (usually his Gloucestershire home-country or his experiences during the 1914–18 war), Gurney is recognisably himself and no-one else, though at times he may also remind one of Hopkins and at others (I suppose inevitably) of Clare. His forceful gnarled syntax is especially characteristic;

There is nothing for my Poetry, who was the child of joy,
But to work out in verse crazes of my untold pain;
In verse which shall recall the rightness of a former day.

And of Beauty, that has command of many gods; in vain
Have I written, imploring your help, who have let destroy
A servant of yours, by evil men birth better at once had slain.

And for my Country, God knows my heart, and men to me
Were dear there, I was friend also of every look of sun or rain;
It has betrayed as evil women want only a man their toy.

Mr. Blunden describes this volume as

The splendid fragments of a mind immortal
With rubbish mixed, and glittering in the dust,

and refers to it as a 'tantalising legacy.' I agree: but I think it would be misplaced to regret what has been lost to us rather than to be grateful for what we now unexpectedly have. 'Genuine poetry' (whatever that may be!) is not so common that we can afford to look any of it in the mouth, no matter how fragmentary or 'with rubbish mixed.'

"Miss I. R. Orton, whose first book of poems has just been issued, *The Dreamer and the Sheaves* (Oxford University Press [Geoffrey Cumberlege] 8s. 6d.), is also a poet who produces fragments of 'poetry' within the boundaries of pieces of writing that are not yet 'poems'; and again, I think one should be grateful for what one has got. Miss Orton seems to me to think poetically rather than to write poetically (if one may make that distinction); her poems, which are almost all very short, read like translated excerpts from some long and immensely pregnant poem in another language. There is rarely much verbal felicity; nevertheless there is a certain 'harmony of idea' which confers upon the best of these poems a very real distinction. Here is *Unwashed Hands*:

I am afraid to wash my hands too often
In case you think I have renounced you
And their white skin mocks your weariness;

I am afraid to empty my glass
In case you think I am not coming back;

I am afraid to brace my shoulders,
To walk briskly in the way,
In case you think I have come to judge you,
In case I never see you when you sit on the kerb-side
Playing a stringed instrument,
The unsuspected angel of the roads.

It is this distinction of thought and feeling, rather than of language, that makes Miss Orton one of the potentially good writers (perhaps even of prose rather than of verse) of today.

"Lastly (for I see that you are beginning to acquire that glassy-eyed lunch-time look) there is what would a few years ago have been a very unwelcomed book indeed, Mr. Eric George's *Cephalus and Procris* (Harvill Press. 12s. 6d.). This is a verse novel: the classical myth is first outlined in (extremely wooden) blank verse, and is then worked out in a modern setting in heroic couplets. Mr. George is no poet (as is sufficiently evinced by his total failure to master blank verse) but he is a competent and pleasant versifier in a style eminently suitable to narrative—flowing, unobtrusive, dignified, and easy on the ear and eye. Here is the beginning of a description of the Derby:

The parade had started, and there shot across
The empty emerald background of the course
A thing of life and colour, horse and man
Spurning the ground whereon their shadows ran—
Beauty apparent, moving two in one,
The horse, a bay, and he who sat thereon

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A crouching shape of violet and blue
That looked a flower yet like a swallow flew.

"The language is 'literary' and stilted ('whereon,' 'thereon'), but taken in bulk is perfectly agreeable, the level of writing is moreover remarkably consistent: almost any quotation at random would have served me as well. His story, seen with the painter's eye, studded with duchesses and diamonds, castles, race-horses, and droves of impossibly beautiful people, is delicately absurd—it would have been intolerable in prose—and perhaps often a little absurder than the poet may have intended: nevertheless it is an absurdity that is touching, always grave and ardent, idealistic, magnificently oblivious that here and there in odd corners of this contemporary world lurks the materialistic, the vulgar, and (be it whispered to Mr. George) the not even altogether beautiful. It is a Watteau-like dream-world that he has constructed, which is perhaps why the author has sub-titled it 'An Episode between Two Wars': but in a subsequent edition he might drop even this last concession to the workaday world, and let his verse-balloon float altogether untethered in the iridescent upper air above it. Those who are still capable of sitting down to read verse for a couple of hours (as distinct from those who take a couple of swigs of Dylan and fall flat) should find this a thoroughly acceptable volume—it is probably the best English verse-novel since Gilbert Frankau's *One of Us*."

"IT SEEMS to me that your 'new writers' are nothing but the funeral bake-meats of the Georgians."

"What if they are? It is only a question of nomenclature, and in any case we reserve the term Georgian (as you know) to those contributors to the Georgian Anthology whom we disapprove of on other grounds also—we don't call Robert Graves or D. H. Lawrence Georgians. But in any case these new writers differ (for the most part) from the earlier Georgians in one essential respect: they are deeply read in the 'intense' poetry of the inter-war period and make full use of its achievements and discoveries. They are (as has been suggested often enough before) the consolidators, investigating and exploiting the central territory acquired by their predecessors the experimenters, whilst ignoring the still debatable frontiers of that territory. But reaction against the poetry of the thirties is of course coming from within the camp as well as without. The less submissive younger members have become weary of the desolate pronunciamentos and ukases of (shall we say?) Mr. Eliot's fleas' fleas.

" *Time's up when pupils' pupils school the school* says Mr. Peter Viereck in his new volume, *The First Morning* (Scribner's. $3.00). This book contains a lot of good lyrical writing (which alas! I must restrain myself from quoting), but it is with his section 'Irreverences' that I am here concerned: and I will close with his *Love Song of Prufrock Junior*:

Must all successful rebels grow
From toreador to Sacred Cow?
What cults he slew, his cult begot.
'In my beginning,' said his Scot,
'My end'; and aging eagles know
That 1912 was long ago.
Today the women come and go
Talking of T. S. Eliot."

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Isaiah Berlin

A Marvellous Decade (1)

1838-48: The Birth of the Russian Intelligentsia

I

THE title of these lectures is "A Marvellous Decade," and both title and subject are taken from a long essay in which the 19th century Russian critic and literary historian, Paul Annenkov, described his friends more than thirty years after the period with which he deals. Annenkov was an agreeable, intelligent, and exceedingly civilised man, and a most understanding and dependable friend. He was not, perhaps, a very profound critic, nor was the range of his learning wide—he was a scholarly dilettante, a traveller about Europe who liked to meet eminent men, an eager and observant intellectual tourist.

It is clear that in addition to his other qualities he possessed considerable personal charm, so much, indeed, that he even succeeded in captivating Karl Marx, who wrote him at least one letter considered important by Marxists on the subject of Proudhon. Indeed, Annenkov has left us an exceedingly vivid description of the physical appearance and ferocious intellectual manner of the young Marx—an admirably detached and ironical vignette, perhaps the best portrait of him that has survived.

It is true that, after he went back to Russia, Annenkov lost interest in Marx, who was so deeply snubbed and hurt by this desertion by a man on whom he thought he had made an indelible impression, that in after years he expressed himself with extreme bitterness about the Russian intellectual *flâneurs* who fluttered around him in Paris in the forties, but turned out not to have any serious intentions after all. But although not very loyal to the figure of Marx, Annenkov did retain the friendship of his compatriots Belinsky, Turgenev, and Herzen to the end of his days. And it is about them that he is most interesting.

"The Marvellous Decade" is a description by him of the life of some among the early members—the original founders—of the Russian intelligentsia, between 1838 and 1848, when they were all young men, some still at the university, some just emerged from it. The subject is of more than literary or psychological interest because these early Russian intellectuals created something which was destined ultimately to have world-wide social

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This series of lectures was originally delivered in October – November 1954 as the Northcliffe Lectures in University College, London. They are presented here in the form in which they were broadcast later in the year on the Third Programme of the BBC. The first lecture was intended as an introduction to the subject.

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and political consequences. The largest single effect of the movement, I think it would be fair to say, was the Russian Revolution itself. These *révoltés* early Russian intellectuals set the moral tone for the kind of talk and action which continued throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, until the final climax in 1917.

It is true that the Russian Revolution (and no event had been more discussed and speculated about during the century which preceded it—not even the great French Revolution) did not follow the lines that most of these writers and talkers had anticipated. Yet despite the tendency to minimise the importance of such activity by such thinkers as, for example, Tolstoy or Karl Marx, general ideas do have great influence. The Nazis seemed to grasp this fact when they took care at once to eliminate intellectual leaders in conquered countries, as likely to be among the most dangerous figures in their path; to this degree they had analysed history correctly. But whatever may be thought about the part played by thought in affecting human lives, it would be idle to deny that the influence of ideas—and in particular of philosophical ideas—at the beginning of the 19th century did make a considerable difference to what happened later. Without the kind of outlook of which, for example, the Hegelian philosophy, then so prevalent, was both the cause and the symptom, a great deal of what happened might, perhaps, either not have happened, or else might have happened differently. Consequently the chief importance of these writers and thinkers, historically speaking, lies in the fact that they set in train ideas destined to have cataclysmic effects not merely in Russia itself, but far beyond her borders.

And these men have more specific claims to fame. It is difficult to imagine that the Russian literature of the mid-century and, in particular, the great Russian novels, could have come into being, save for the specific atmosphere which these men created and promoted. The works of Turgenev, Tolstoy, Goncharov, Dostoevsky, and of minor novelists too, are penetrated with a sense of their own time, of this or that particular social and historical milieu and its ideological content, to an even higher degree than the 'social' novels of the West. To this topic I propose to revert later.

Lastly, they invented social criticism. This may seem a very bold and even absurd claim to make; but by social criticism I do not mean the appeal to standards of judgment which involve a view of literature and art as having, or as obliged to have a primarily didactic purpose; nor yet the kind of criticism developed by romantic essayists, especially in Germany, in which heroes or villains are regarded as quintessential types of humanity and examined as such; nor yet the critical process (in which the French in particular showed superlative skill) which attempts to reconstruct the process of artistic creation mainly by analysing the social, spiritual, and psychological environment and the origins and economic position of the artist, rather than his purely artistic methods or character or specific quality; although, to some degree, the Russian intellectuals did all this too.

Social criticism in this sense, had, of course, been practised before them, and far more professionally, scrupulously, and profoundly, by critics of the West. The kind of social criticism that I mean is the method virtually invented by the great Russian essayist Belinsky—the kind of criticism in which the line between life and art is of set purpose not too clearly drawn; in which praise and blame, love and hatred, admiration and contempt, are freely expressed both for artistic forms and for the human characters drawn, both for the personal qualities of authors and for the content of their novels, and the criteria involved in such attitudes, whether consciously or implicitly, are identical with those in terms of which living human beings are in everyday life judged or described.

This is, of course, a type of criticism which has itself been much criticised. It is accused of confusing art with life, and thereby derogating from the purity of art. Whether these Russian critics did perpetrate this confusion or not, they introduced a new attitude towards the novel, derived from their particular outlook on life. This outlook later came to be defined as that peculiar to members of the *intelligentsia*—

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and the young radicals of 1838–48, Belinsky, Turgenev, Bakunin, Herzen, whom Annenkov so devotedly describes in his book, are its true original founders. '*Intelligentsia*' is a Russian word invented in the 19th century, that has since acquired world-wide significance. The phenomenon itself, with its historical and literally revolutionary consequences, is, I suppose, the largest single Russian contribution to social change in the world.

The concept of *intelligentsia* must not be confused with the notion of intellectuals. Its members thought of themselves as united by something more than mere interest in ideas; they conceived themselves as being a dedicated order, almost a secular priesthood, devoted to the spreading of a specific attitude to life, something like a gospel. Historically their emergence requires some explanation.

II

Most Russian historians are agreed that the great social schism between the educated and the 'dark folk' in Russian history sprang from the wound inflicted on Russian society by Peter the Great. In his reforming zeal Peter sent selected young men into the Western world, and when they had acquired the languages of the West and the various new arts and skills which sprang from the scientific revolution of the 17th century, brought them back to become the leaders of that new social order which, with ruthless and violent haste, he imposed upon his feudal land. In this way he created a small class of new men, half-Russian, half foreign—educated abroad, even if they were Russian by birth; these, in due course, became a small managerial and bureaucratic oligarchy, set above the people, no longer sharing in their still medieval culture; cut off from them irrevocably. The government of this large and unruly nation became constantly more difficult, as social and economic conditions in Russia increasingly diverged from the progressing West. With the widening of the gulf, greater and greater repression had to be exercised by the ruling élite. The small group of governors thus grew more and more estranged from the people they were set to govern.

The rhythm of government in Russia in the 18th and early 19th centuries is one of alternate repression and liberalisation. Thus, when Catherine the Great felt that the yoke was growing too heavy, or the appearance of things became too barbarous, she relaxed the brutal rigidity of the despotism and was duly acclaimed by Voltaire and Grimm. When this seemed to lead to too much sudden stirring from within, too much protest, and too many educated persons began to compare conditions in Russia unfavourably with conditions in the West, she scented the beginnings of something subversive; the French Revolution finally terrified her; she clamped down again. Once more the régime grew stern and repressive.

The situation scarcely altered in the reign of Alexander I. The vast majority of the inhabitants of Russia still lived in a feudal darkness, with a weak and, on the whole, ignorant priesthood exercising relatively little moral authority, while a large army of fairly faithful and at times not inefficient bureaucrats pressed down on the more and more recalcitrant peasantry. Between the oppressors and the oppressed there existed a small cultivated class, largely French-speaking, aware of the enormous gap between the way in which life could be lived—or was lived—in the West and the way in which it was lived by the Russian masses. They were, for the most part, men acutely conscious of the difference between justice and injustice, civilisation and barbarism, but aware also that conditions were too difficult to alter, that they had too great a stake in the régime themselves, and that reform might bring the whole structure toppling down. Many among them were reduced either to an easy-going quasi-Voltairean cynicism, at once subscribing to liberal principles and whipping their serfs; or to noble, eloquent and futile despair.

This situation altered with the invasion of Napoleon which brought Russia into the middle of Europe. Almost overnight, Russia found herself a great power in the heart of Europe, conscious of her crushing strength, dominating the entire scene, and accepted by Europeans with some terror and great

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reluctance, as not merely equal but superior to them in sheer brute force.

The triumph over Napoleon and the march to Paris were events in the history of Russian ideas as vitally important as the reforms of Peter. They made Russia aware of her national unity, and generated in her a sense of herself as a great European nation, recognised as such; as being no longer a despised collection of barbarians teeming behind a Chinese wall, sunk in medieval darkness, half-heartedly and clumsily imitating foreign models. Moreover, since the long Napoleonic war had brought about great and lasting patriotic fervour, and, as a result of a general participation in a common ideal, an increase in the feeling of equality between the orders, a number of relatively idealistic young men began to feel new bonds between themselves and their nation which their education could not by itself have inspired. The growth of patriotic nationalism brought with it, as its inevitable concomitant, a growth of the feeling of responsibility for the chaos, the squalor, the poverty, the inefficiency, the brutality, the appalling disorder in Russia. This general moral uneasiness affected the least sentimental and perceptive, the hardest-hearted of the semi-civilised members of the ruling class.

III

THERE were other factors which contributed to this collective sense of guilt. One, certainly, was the coincidence (for coincidence it was) of the rise of the Romantic movement with the entrance of Russia into Europe. One of the cardinal Romantic doctrines (connected with the cognate doctrines that history proceeds according to discoverable laws or patterns, and that nations are unitary 'organisms,' not mere collections, and 'evolve' in an 'organic,' not a mechanical or haphazard, fashion) is that everything in the world is as and where and when it is, because it participates in a single universal purpose. Romanticism encourages the idea that not only individuals but groups, and not only groups but institutions—states, churches, professional bodies, associations that have ostensibly been created for definite, often purely utilitarian purposes, come to be possessed by a 'spirit' of which they themselves might well be unaware —awareness of which is, indeed, the very process of enlightenment.

The doctrine that every human being, country, race, institution has its own unique, individual, inner purpose which is itself an 'organic' element in the wider purpose of all that exists, and in becoming conscious of that purpose is, by this very fact, participating in the march towards light and freedom—this secular version of an ancient religious belief powerfully impressed the minds of the young Russians. They imbibed it all the more readily as a result of two causes, one material, one spiritual.

The material cause was the unwillingness of the government to let its subjects travel to France, which was thought of, particularly after 1830, as a chronically revolutionary country, liable to perpetual upheavals, blood-letting, violence, and chaos. By contrast, Germany lay peaceful under the heel of a very respectable despotism. Consequently young Russians were encouraged to go to German universities, where they would obtain a sound training in civic principles that would, so it was supposed, make them still more faithful servants of the Russian autocracy.

The result was the exact opposite. Crypto-francophile sentiment in Germany itself was at this time so violent, and enlightened Germans themselves believed in ideas—in this case those of the French enlightenment—so much more intensely and fanatically than the French themselves, that the young Russian Anacharsises who dutifully went to Germany were infected by dangerous ideas far more violently there than they could ever have been had they gone to Paris in the easy going early years of Louis Philippe. The government of Nicholas I could hardly have foreseen the chasm into which it was destined to fall.

If this was the first cause of romantic ferment, the second was its direct consequence. The young Russians who had travelled to Germany, or read German books, became possessed with the simple idea that if, as ultramontane Catholics in France and nationalists in Germany were sedulously maintaining, the

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French Revolution and the decadence that followed were scourges sent upon the people for abandoning their ancient faith and ways, the Russians were surely free from these vices, since, whatever else might be true of them, no revolution had been visited upon them. The German romantic historians were particularly zealous in preaching the view that, if the West was declining because of its scepticism, its rationalism, its materialism, and its abandonment of its own spiritual tradition, then the Germans, who had not suffered this melancholy fate, should be viewed as a fresh and youthful nation, with habits uncontaminated by the corruption of Rome in decay, barbarous indeed, but full of violent energy, about to come into the inheritance falling from the feeble hands of the French. The Russians merely took this process of reasoning one step further. They rightly judged that if youth, barbarism, and lack of education were criteria of a glorious future, they had an even more powerful hope of it than the Germans. Consequently the vast outpouring of German romantic rhetoric about the unexhausted forces of the Germans and the unexpended German language with its pristine purity and the young, unwearied German nation, directed as it was against the 'impure,' Latinised, decadent Western nations was received in Russia with intelligible enthusiasm. Moreover, it stimulated a wave of social idealism which began to possess all classes, from the early twenties of the century until well into the early forties. The proper task of a man was to dedicate himself to the ideal for which his 'essence' was intended. This could not consist in scientific rationalism (as the French 18th century materialists had taught) for it was a delusion to think that life was governed by mechanical laws. It was an even worse delusion to suppose that it was possible to apply a scientific discipline, derived from the study of inanimate matter, to the rational government of human beings and the organisation of their lives on a world-wide scale. The duty of man was something very different—to understand the texture, the 'go,' the principle of life of all there is, to penetrate to the soul of the world (a theological and mystical notion wrapped by the followers of Schelling and Hegel in rationalist terminology), to grasp the hidden, 'inner' plan of the Universe, to understand his own place in it, and to act accordingly.

The task of the philosopher was to discern the march of History, or of what was, somewhat mysteriously, called the Idea, and discover whither it was carrying mankind. History was an enormous river, the direction of which could, however, only be observed by people with a capacity for a special kind of deep, inner contemplation. No amount of observation of the outer world would ever teach you where this inward *Drang*, this subterranean current, led. To uncover it was to be at one with it; the development of both your individual self as a rational being and of society, depended upon a correct assessment of the spiritual direction of the larger 'organism' to which you belonged. To the question of how this organism was to be identified—what it was—the various metaphysicians who founded the principal romantic schools of philosophy replied differently. Herder declared this unit to be a spiritual culture or way of life; the Roman Catholic *penseurs* identified it with the life of the Christian Church; Fichte somewhat obscurely, and after him Hegel unequivocally, declared it to be the national state.

The whole notion of organic method militated in favour of supposing that the favourite instrument of the 18th century—chemical analysis into constituent bits, into ultimate, ineducible atoms, whether of inanimate matter or of social institutions—was an inadequate way of apprehending anything. 'Growth' was the great new term—new, that is, in its application far beyond the bounds of scientific biology; and in order to apprehend what growth was, you had to have a special inner sense capable of apprehending the invisible kingdom, an intuitive grasp of the impalpable principle in virtue of which a thing grows as it does; grows not simply by successive increments of 'dead' parts, but by some kind of occult vital process, that needs a quasi-mystical power of vision, a special sense of the flow of life, of the forces of history, of the principles at work in nature, in art, in personal

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relationships, of the creative spirit unknown to empirical science, to seize upon its essence.

IV

THIS is the heart of political romanticism, from Burke to our own day, and the source of many passionate arguments directed against liberal reform and every attempt to remedy social evils by rational means, on the grounds that these were based on a "mechanical" outlook—a misunderstanding of what society was and of how it developed. The programmes of the French Encyclopædists or of the adherents of Lessing in Germany were condemned as so many ludicrous and procrustean attempts to treat society as if it were an amalgam of bits of inanimate stuff, a mere machine, whereas it was a palpitating, living whole.

The Russians were highly susceptible to this propaganda which drew them in both a reactionary and a progressive direction. You could believe that life or history was a river, which it was useless and perilous to resist or deflect, and with which you could only merge your identity—according to Hegel by discursive, logical, rational activity of the Spirit; according to Schelling intuitively and imaginatively, by a species of inspiration the depth of which is the measure of human genius, from which spring myths and religions, art and science. This led in the conservative direction of eschewing everything analytical, rational, empirical, everything founded upon experiment and natural science. On the other hand, you might declare that you felt within the earth the pangs of a new world struggling to be born. You felt—you knew—that the crust of the old institutions was about to crack under the violent inner heavings of the Spirit. If you genuinely believed this, then you would, if you were a reasonable being, be ready to risk identifying yourself with the revolutionary cause, for otherwise it would destroy you. Everything in the cosmos was progressive, everything moved. And if the future lay in the fragmentation and the explosion of your present universe into a new form of existence, it would be foolish not to collaborate with this violent and inevitable process.

German romanticism, in particular the Hegelian school, was divided on this issue; there were movements in both directions in Germany, and consequently also in Russia, which was virtually an intellectual dependency of German academic thought. But whereas in the West ideas of this kind had for many years been prevalent; theories and opinions, philosophical, social, theological, political, had since the Renaissance at least, clashed and collided with each other in a vast variety of patterns, and formed a general process of rich intellectual activity in which no one idea or opinion could for long hold undisputed supremacy, in Russia this was not the case.

One of the great differences between the areas dominated by the Eastern and the Western Churches was that the former had had no Renaissance and no Reformation. The Balkan peoples could blame the Turkish conquest for their backwardness. But the case was little better in Russia which did not have a gradually expanding, literate, educated class, connecting—by a series of social and intellectual steps—the most and the least enlightened. The gap between the illiterate peasants and those who could read and write was wider in Russia than in other European states, in so far as Russia could be called European at this time.

Thus the number and variety of social or political ideas to be heard if you moved in the salons of St. Petersburg and Moscow was nothing like so great as you would find in the intellectual ferment of Paris or Berlin. Paris was, of course, the great cultural Mecca of the time. But even Berlin was scarcely less agitated with intellectual, theological, artistic controversies, despite the repressive Prussian censorship.

You must therefore imagine in Russia a situation dominated by three main factors: a dead, oppressive, unimaginative government chiefly engaged in holding its subjects down, preventing change largely because this might lead to yet further change, even though its more intelligent members obscurely realised that reform—and that of a very radical kind—for instance with regard to the serf system or the systems of justice and education—was both desirable and inevitable. The second factor was

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the condition of the vast mass of the Russian population—an ill-treated, economically wretched peasantry, sullen and inarticulately groaning, but plainly too weak and unorganised to act effectively in its own defence. Finally, between the two, a small, educated class, deeply and sometimes resentfully influenced by Western ideas with minds tantalised by visits to Europe and by the great new social and intellectual movement at work in the centres of its culture.

May I remind you again that there was in the air as much in Russia as in Germany, a romantic conviction that every man had a unique mission to fulfil if only he could know what it was; and that this created a general enthusiasm for social and metaphysical ideas, perhaps as a kind of ethical substitute for a dying religion, that was not dissimilar to the fervour with which philosophical systems and political utopias had, for more than a century, been acclaimed in France and Germany, by men in search of a new theodicy uncompromised by association with some discredited political or religious establishment. But in Russia there was, in addition, among the educated classes, a moral and intellectual vacuum due to the absence of a Renaissance tradition of secular education, and maintained by the rigid censorship exercised by the government, by widespread illiteracy, by the suspicion and disfavour with which all ideas as such were regarded, by the acts of a nervous and often massively stupid bureaucracy. In this situation, ideas which in the West competed with a large number of other doctrines and attitudes, so that to become dominant they had to emerge victorious from a fierce struggle for survival, in Russia came to lodge in the minds of gifted individuals and, indeed, obsess them, often enough simply for lack of other ideas to satisfy their intellectual needs. Moreover, there existed in the capital cities of the Russian Empire a violent thirst for knowledge indeed, for mental nourishment of any kind, together with an unparalleled sincerity (and sometimes a disarming naïveté) of feeling, intellectual freshness, passionate resolve to participate in world affairs, a troubled consciousness of the social and political problems of a vast country, and very little to respond to this new state of mind. What there was, was mostly imported from abroad—scarcely one single political and social idea to be found in Russia in the 19th century was born on native soil. Perhaps Tolstoy's idea of non-resistance was something genuinely Russian—a re-statement of a Christian position so original, that it had the force of a new idea when he preached it. But, in general, I do not think that Russia has contributed a single new social or political idea; nothing that was not traceable, not merely to some ultimate Western root, but to some doctrine discoverable in the West eight or ten or twelve years earlier than its first appearance in Russia.

V

You must conceive, therefore, of an astonishingly impressionable society with an unheard of capacity for absorbing ideas—ideas which might waft across, in the most casual fashion, because someone brought back a book or collection of pamphlets from Paris (or because some audacious bookseller had smuggled them in); because someone attended the lectures of a neo-Hegelian in Berlin, or had made friends with Schelling, or had met an English missionary with strange ideas. Genuine excitement was generated by the arrival of a new 'message' emanating from some disciple of Saint-Simon or Fourier, of a book by Proudhon, by Cabet, by Leroux, the latest social messiahs in France; or again, by an idea attributed to David Strauss or Ludwig Feuerbach or Lamennais or some other forbidden author. Because of their relative scarcity in Russia, these ideas and fragments of ideas would be seized upon with the utmost avidity. The social and economic prophets in Europe seemed full of confidence in the new revolutionary future, and their ideas had an intoxicating effect upon the young Russians.

When such doctrines were promulgated in the West, they sometimes excited their audience, and occasionally led to the formation of parties or sects, but they were not regarded by the majority of those whom they reached as the final truth; and even those who thought them crucially important did not immediately begin to put them in practice with every

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means at their disposal. The Russians were liable to do just this; to argue to themselves that if the premisses were true and the reasoning correct, true conclusions followed: and further, that if these conclusions dictated certain actions as being necessary and beneficial, then if one was honest and serious one had a plain duty to try to realise them as swiftly and as fully as possible. Instead of the generally held view of the Russians as a gloomy, mystical, self-lacerating, somewhat religious nation, I should like to suggest, at least as far as the articulate *intelligentsia* are concerned, that they were somewhat exaggerated Westerners of the 19th century; and that so far from being liable to irrationalism or neurotic self-absorption, what they possessed in a high, perhaps excessive degree was extremely developed powers of reasoning, extreme logic and lucidity.

It is true that when people tried to put these utopian schemes into operation and were almost immediately frustrated by the police, disillusionment followed, and with it a liability to fall into a state of apathetic melancholy or violent exasperation. But this came later. The original phase was neither mystical nor introspective; but on the contrary, rationalist, bold, extroverted, and optimistic. I think it was the celebrated terrorist Stepniak, who once said about the Russians that, whatever other qualities they might have, they never recoiled from the consequences of their own reasoning. If you study the Russian 'ideologies' of the 19th and indeed the 20th century, I think you will find, on the whole, that the more difficult, the more paradoxical, the more unpalatable a conclusion is, the greater is the degree of passion and enthusiasm with which some Russians, at any rate, tend to embrace it; for to do so seems to them no more than a proof of a man's moral sincerity, of the genuineness of his devotion to the truth and of his seriousness as a human being; and although the consequences of one's reasoning may appear *prima facie* unplausible or even downright absurd, one must not for that reason recoil from them, for what would that be but cowardice, weakness, or—worst of all—the setting up of comfort before the truth? Herzen once said, "The fact about the Russians is that we tend to analyse everything into pieces. We never abandon logic; we only abandon the truth." And this characteristically acid comment is, as a verdict on some of his contemporaries, not altogether unjust.

VI

IMAGINE, then, a group of young men, living under the petrified régime of Nicholas I—men with a degree of passion for ideas perhaps never equalled in a European society, seizing upon ideas as they come from the West with unconscionable enthusiasm, and making plans to translate them swiftly into practice—and you will have some notion of what the early members of the *intelligentsia* were like. They were a small group of *littérateurs*, both professional and amateur, conscious of being alone in a bleak world, with a hostile and arbitrary government on the one hand, and a completely uncomprehending mass of oppressed and inarticulate peasants on the other, conceiving of themselves as a kind of self-conscious army, carrying a banner for all to see—of reason and science, of liberty, of a better life.

Like persons in a dark wood, they tended to feel a certain solidarity simply because they were so few and far between; because they were weak, because they were truthful, because they were sincere, because they were unlike the others. Moreover, they had accepted the romantic doctrine that every man is called upon to perform a mission beyond mere selfish purposes of material existence; that because they had had an education superior to that of their oppressed brothers they had a direct duty to help them toward the light; that this duty was uniquely binding upon them, and that, if they fulfilled it, as history surely intended them to do, the future of Russia might yet be as glorious as her past had been empty and dark; and that for this, they must preserve their inner solidarity as a dedicated group. They were a persecuted minority who drew strength from their very persecution; they were the self-conscious bearers of a Western message, freed from the chains of ignorance and prejudice, stupidity or cowardice, by some

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great Western liberator—a German romantic, a French socialist—who had transformed their vision.

The act of liberation is something not uncommon in the intellectual history of Europe. A liberator is one who does not so much answer your problems, whether of theory or conduct, as transform them—he ends your anxieties and frustrations by placing you within a new framework where old problems cease to have meaning, and new ones appear, which have their solutions, as it were, already to some degree prefigured in the new universe in which you find yourself. I mean that those who were liberated by the humanists of the Renaissance or the *philosophes* of the 18th century did not merely think their old questions answered more correctly by Plato or Newton than by Albertus Magnus or the Jesuits—rather they had a sense of a new universe. Questions which had troubled their predecessors suddenly appeared to them senseless and unnecessary. The moment at which ancient chains fall off, and you feel yourself recreated in a new image can make a life. One cannot tell by whom a man might not, in this sense, be set free—Voltaire probably emancipated a greater number of human beings in his own lifetime than anyone before or after him; Schiller, Kant, Mill, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Samuel Butler, Freud have liberated human beings. For all I know Anatole France, or even Mr. Aldous Huxley may have had this effect.

The Russians of whom I speak were 'liberated' by the great German metaphysical writers who freed them on the one hand from the dogmata of the Orthodox Church, on the other from the dry formulae of the 18th century rationalists, which had been not so much refuted as discredited by the failure of the French Revolution. What Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, and their numerous expositors and interpreters provided was little short of a new religion. A corollary of this new frame of mind is the Russian attitude to literature.

VII

THERE may be said to exist at least two attitudes towards literature and the arts in general, and it may not be uninteresting to contrast them. For short, I propose to call one French, the other Russian. But these will be mere labels used for brevity and convenience. I hope I shall not be thought to maintain that every French writer held what I propose to call the 'French' attitude, or every Russian the 'Russian.' The distinction taken in any literal sense would, of course, be gravely misleading. The French writers of the 19th century on the whole believed that they were purveyors. They thought that an intellectual or an artist had a duty to himself and to the public—to produce as good an object as possible. If you were a painter, you produced as beautiful a picture as you could. If you were a writer you produced the best piece of writing of which you were capable. That was your duty to yourself, and it was what the public rightly expected. If your works were good, they were recognised, and you were successful. If you possessed little taste, or skill, or luck, then you were unsuccessful; and that was that.

In this 'French' view, the artist's private life was of no more concern to the public than the private life of a carpenter. If you order a table, you are not interested in whether the carpenter has a good motive for making it or not; or whether he lives on good terms with his wife and children. And to say of the carpenter that his table must in some way be degraded or decadent, because his morality is degraded or decadent, would be regarded as bigoted, and indeed as silly: certainly as a grotesque criticism of his merit as a carpenter.

This attitude of mind (which I have deliberately exaggerated) was rejected with the utmost vehemence by almost every major Russian writer of the 19th century; and this was so whether they were writers with an explicit moral or social bias, or æsthetic writers believing in art for art's sake. The 'Russian' attitude (at least in the last century) is that man is one and cannot be divided; that it is not true that a man is a citizen on the one hand and, quite independently of this, a money-maker on the other, and that these functions can be kept in separate compartments; that a man is one kind of personality as a voter, another as a painter, and a third as a husband. Man is indivisible. To say, "Speaking as an artist, I feel

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this; and speaking as a voter, I feel that," is always false; and immoral and dishonest too. Man is one, and what he does, he does with his whole personality. It is the duty of men to do what is good, speak the truth, and produce beautiful objects. They must speak the truth in whatever media they happen to work. If they are novelists, they must speak the truth as novelists. If they are ballet dancers they must express the truth in their dancing.

This idea of integrity, of total commitment, is the heart of the romantic attitude. Certainly Mozart and Haydn would have been exceedingly surprised if they were told that as artists they were peculiarly sacred, lifted far above other men, priests uniquely dedicated to the worship of some transcendent reality to betray which is mortal sin. They conceived of themselves as true craftsmen, sometimes as inspired servants of God or of Nature, seeking to celebrate their divine Maker in whatever they did; but in the first place they were composers who wrote works to order and strove to make them as melodious as possible. By the 19th century, the notion of the artist as a sacred vessel, set apart, with a unique soul and unique status, was exceedingly widespread. It was born, I suppose, mainly among the Germans, and is connected with the belief that it is the duty of every man to give himself to a cause; that upon the artist and poet this duty is binding in a special degree, for he is a wholly dedicated being; and that his fate is peculiarly sublime and tragic, for his form of self-surrender is to sacrifice himself totally to his ideal. What this ideal is, is comparatively unimportant. The essential thing is to offer oneself without calculation, to give all one has for the sake of the light within (whatever it may illuminate) from pure motives. For only motives count.

Every Russian writer was made conscious that he was on a public stage, testifying; so that the smallest lapse on his part, a lie, a deception, an act of self-indulgence, lack of zeal for the truth, was a heinous crime. If you were principally engaged in making money, then, perhaps, you were not quite so strictly accountable to society. But if you spoke in public at all, be it as poet or novelist or historian or in whatever public capacity, then you accepted full responsibility for guiding and leading the people. If this was your calling then you were bound by a Hippocratic oath to tell the truth and never to betray it, and to dedicate yourself selflessly to your goal.

There are certain clear cases—Tolstoy is one of them—where this principle was accepted literally and followed to its extreme consequences. But this tendency in Russia was far wider than Tolstoy's peculiar case would indicate. Turgenev, for example, who is commonly thought of as the most Western among Russian writers, a man who believed in the pure and independent nature of art more than, say, Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, who consciously and deliberately avoided moralising in his novels, and was, indeed, sternly called to order by other Russian authors for an excessive—and, it was indicated, regrettably Western — preoccupation with æsthetic principles, for devoting too much time and attention to the mere form and style of his works, for insufficient probing into the deep moral and spiritual essence of his characters—even the "aesthetic" Turgenev is wholly committed to the belief that social and moral problems are the central issues of life and of art, and that they are intelligible only in their own specific historical and ideological context.

I was astonished the other day to see in a review by an eminent literary critic in a Sunday newspaper that, of all authors, Turgenev was not particularly conscious of the historical forces of his time. This is the very opposite of the truth. Every novel of Turgenev deals explicitly with social and moral problems within a specific historical setting; it describes human beings in particular social conditions at an identifiable date. The mere fact that Turgenev was an artist to his marrowbones, and understood the universal aspects of human character or predicament, need not blind us to the fact that he fully accepted his duty as a writer to speak the objective truth—social no less than psychological—in public and not to betray it.

If someone had proved that Balzac was a spy in the service of the French Government, or that Stendhal conducted immoral operations on

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the Stock Exchange, it might have upset some of their friends, but it would not, on the whole, have been regarded as derogating from their stature and genius as artists. But there is scarcely any Russian writer in the 19th century who, if something of the sort had been discovered about himself, would have doubted for an instant whether the charge was relevant to his activity as a writer. I can think of no Russian writer who would have tried to slip out with the alibi that he was one kind of person as a writer, to be judged, let us say, solely in terms of his novels, and quite another as a private individual. That is the gulf between the characteristically 'Russian' and 'French' conceptions of life and art, as I have christened them. I do not mean that every Western writer would accept the ideal which I have attributed to the French, nor that every Russian would subscribe to what I have called the 'Russian' conception. But, broadly speaking, I think it is a correct division, and holds good even when you come to the æsthetic writers—for instance, the Russian symbolist poets at the turn of the last century, who despised every form of utilitarian or didactic or 'impure' art, took not the slightest interest in social analysis or psychological novels, and accepted and exaggerated the aestheticism of the west to an *outré* degree. Even these Russian symbolists did not think that they had no moral obligation. They saw themselves, indeed, as Pythian priestesses upon some mystical tripod, as seers of a reality of which this world was merely a dark symbol and occult expression, and, remote though they were from social idealism, believed with moral and spiritual fervour in their own sacred vows. They were witnesses to a mystery; that was the ideal which they were morally not permitted, by the rules of their art, to betray. This attitude is utterly different from anything that Flaubert laid down about the fidelity of the artist to his art, which to him is identical with the proper function of the artist, or the best method of becoming as good an artist as one could be. The attitude which I attribute to the Russians is a specifically moral attitude; their attitude to life and to art is identical, and it is ultimately a moral attitude. This is something not to be confused with the notion of art with a utilitarian purpose, in which, of course, some of them believed. Certainly, the men of whom I propose to speak—the men of the thirties and early forties—did not believe that the business of novels and the business of poetry was to teach men to be better. The ascendancy of utilitarianism came much later, and it was propagated by men of far duller and cruder minds than those of whom I speak.

The most characteristic Russian writers believed that writers are, in the first place, men; and that they are directly and continually responsible for all their utterances, whether made in novels or in private letters, in public speeches or in conversation. This view, in turn, affected Western conceptions of art and life to a marked degree, and is one of the arresting contributions to thought of the Russian *intelligentsia*. Whether for good or ill, it made a very violent impact upon the European conscience.

VIII

AT THE time of which I speak, Hegel and Hegelianism dominated the thought of young Russia. With all the moral ardour of which they were capable, the emancipated young men believed in the necessity of total immersion in his philosophy. Hegel was the great new liberator, therefore, it was a duty—a categorical duty—to express in every act of your life, whether as a private individual or as a writer, truths which you had absorbed from him. This allegiance—later transferred to Darwin, to Spencer, to Marx, is difficult to understand for those who have not read the fervid literature, above all, the literary correspondence of the period. To illustrate it, let me quote some ironical pages from Herzen, the great Russian publicist, who lived the latter part of his life abroad, when, looking back, he described the atmosphere of his youth. It is, as so often with this incomparable satirist, a somewhat exaggerated picture—in places a caricature—but nevertheless it successfully conveys the mood of the time. After saying that an exclusively contemplative attitude is wholly opposed to the Russian character, he goes on

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to talk about the fate of the Hegelian philosophy when it was brought over to Russia:

> There is no paragraph in all the three parts of the great *Logic*, two parts of the *Aesthetic*, of the *Encyclopædia*, which was not captured after the most desperate debates lasting several nights. People who adored each other became estranged for entire weeks because they could not agree on a definition of 'transcendental spirit,' were personally offended by opinions about 'absolute personality' and 'being in itself.' The most worthless tracts of German philosophy that came out of Berlin and other German county towns and villages, in which there was any mention of Hegel, were written for and read to shreds—till they came out in yellow stains, till pages dropped out after a few days. Thus, just as Professor Francœur was moved to tears in Paris when he heard that he was regarded as a great mathematician in Russia, that his algebraical symbolism was used for differential equations by our younger generation, so might they all have wept for joy—all these forgotten Werders, Marheineckes, Michelets, Ottos, Vatkes, Schalles, Rosenkranzes, and Arnold Ruge himself—if they had known what duels, what battles they had started in Moscow between the Maroseika and Mokhovaya [the names of two streets in Moscow], how they were read, how they were bought.
>
> I have a right to say this because, carried away by the torrents of those days, I myself wrote just like this, and was, in fact, startled when our famous astronomer, Perevoshchikov, referred to it all as "bird talk." Nobody at this time would have disowned a sentence like this: "the concrescence of abstract ideas in the sphere of the plastic represents that phase of the self-questing spirit in which it, defining itself for itself, is potentialised from natural immanence into the harmonious sphere of formal consciousness in beauty."

He continues:

> A man who went for a walk in Sokolniki [a suburb of Moscow], went there not just for a walk, but in order to surrender himself to the pantheistic feeling of his identification with the cosmos. If, on the way, he met a tipsy soldier or a peasant woman who said something to him, the philosopher did not simply talk with them, but determined the substantiality of the popular element, both in its immediate and its accidental presentation. The very tear which might rise to his eye was strictly classified and referred to its proper category—*Gemüth*, or the tragic element in the heart.

Herzen's ironical sentences need not be taken too literally. But they show vividly the kind of *exalté* intellectual mood in which his friends had lived.

Let me now offer you a passage from Annenkov—from the excellent essay called "The Marvellous Decade," after which these lectures are named. It gives a different picture of these same people at the same period, and it is worth quoting if only to correct Herzen's amusing sketch, which may, quite unjustly, suggest that all this intellectual activity was so much worthless gibberish on the part of a ridiculous collection of over-excited young intellectuals. Annenkov describes life in a country house, in the village of Sokolovo in 1845, that had been taken for the summer by three friends—Granovsky, who was a professor of history in the University of Moscow, Ketscher, who was an eminent translator, and Herzen himself, who was a rich young man of no very fixed profession, then still vaguely in government service. They took the house for the purpose of entertaining their friends and enjoying intellectual conversation in the evenings.

> Only one thing was not allowed, and that was to be a philistine. Not that what was expected were flights of eloquence or flashes of brilliant wit—on the contrary, students absorbed in their own special fields were respected deeply. But what was demanded was a certain intellectual level and certain qualities of character. . . . They protected themselves against contacts with anything that seemed corrupt, and were worried by its intrusion, however casual and unimportant.
>
> They did not cut themselves off from the world, but stood aloof from it, and attracted attention for that very reason; and because of this they developed a special sensitiveness to everything artificial and spurious. Any sign of a morally doubtful sentiment, evasive talk, dishonest ambiguity, empty rhetoric, insincerity, was detected at once, and provoked immediate storms of ironical mockery and merciless attack.
>
> The circle resembled an order of knighthood, a brotherhood of warriors; it had no written constitution. Yet it knew all its members scattered over our vast country; it was not organised, but a tacit understanding prevailed. It stretched, as it were, across the chaotic stream of the life of its time, and protected it from aimlessly flooding its banks. Some adored it; others detested it.

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IX

THE sort of society which Annenkov described, although it may have about it a slight suggestion of priggishness, is the sort of society which tends to crystallise whenever there is an intellectual minority (say in Bloomsbury or anywhere else) which sees itself as divided by its ideals from the world in which it lives, and tries to promote certain intellectual and moral standards, at any rate, within itself. That is what these Russians from 1838 to 1848 tried to do. They were unique in Russia in that they did not automatically come from any one social class, even though few among them were of humble origin. They had to be moderately well-born, otherwise their chance of obtaining an adequate i.e. Western education was too small.

Their attitude to each other was genuinely free from bourgeois self-consciousness. They were not impressed by wealth, nor were they self-conscious about poverty. They did not admire success. Indeed they almost tried to avoid it. Few among them became successful persons in the worldly sense of that word. A number went into exile, others were professors perpetually under the eye of Czarist police; some were poorly paid hacks and translators; some simply disappeared. One or two of them left the movement and were regarded as renegades. There was Mikhail Katkov, for example, a gifted journalist and writer who had been an original member of the movement and had then crossed over to the Czarist government, and there was Vassily Botkin, the intimate friend of Belinsky and Turgenev, who started as a philosophical tea merchant and became a confirmed reactionary in later years. But these were exceptional cases.

Turgenev was always regarded as a case somewhat betwixt and between: a man whose heart was in the right place, who was not devoid of ideals, and knew well what enlightenment was and yet not quite reliable. Certainly he was vehement against the serf system, and his book, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, had admittedly had a more powerful social effect upon the public than any other book hitherto published in Russia—something like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the United States at a later date, from which it differed principally in being a work of art, indeed of genius. Turgenev was regarded by the young radicals, on the whole, as a supporter of the right principles, on the whole a friend and an ally, but unfortunately weak, flighty, liable to indulge his love of pleasure at the expense of his convictions; apt to vanish unaccountably—and a little guiltily—and be lost to his political friends; yet still 'one of us'; still a member of the party; still with us rather than against us, in spite of the fact that he often did things which had to be severely criticised, and which seemed mainly due to his unfortunate infatuation with the French *diva*, Pauline Viardot, which led him to sell his stories—surreptitiously—to reactionary newspapers in order to obtain enough money to be able to buy a box at the opera, since the virtuous left-wing periodicals could not afford to pay as much. A vacillating and unreliable friend; still, and despite everything, fundamentally on our side; a man and a brother.

There was a very self-conscious sense of literary and moral solidarity amongst these people, which created between them a feeling of genuine fraternity and of purpose which certainly no other society in Russia has ever had. Herzen, who later met a great many celebrated people, and was a critical and intolerant, often an exceedingly sardonic and at times cynical judge of men, and Annenkov, who had travelled a good deal in Western Europe and had a variegated acquaintance among the notables of his day—both these connoisseurs of human beings, in later years, confessed that never in their lives had they again found anywhere a society so civilised and gay and free, so enlightened, spontaneous, and agreeable, so sincere, so intelligent, so gifted, and attractive in every way.

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Chester Kallman

Atavisms

So lass' mich scheinen bis ich werde . . .

I

A hospital below-ground for the one-lunged
And the relatives one never sees: I have
Been here before before before among
The scaffolding and rules against the use
Of nicotine. The relatives forgive
One wryly, "but of course a letter would
Have helped us" *still, still the close*
Rooms tremble like an ocean liner,
For building cannot cease
Where the world remains to be
burrowed
And death is far from final.

Visitor, inmate or mere observer was
I then? Two balding women in their crippled
chairs
Give suck to air and turn away their eyes
To watch how death, distempered, from each wall
Fades off into the air; and I, of this air,
Pool of swan-songs, air used by the sea,
Partook, I know, once, who now with all,
Gasping, smoke, nor fear a scolding:
Diapers, at lunch, boil
On the kitchen stove; all the
Food in the ice-box is moldy.

Relate then how to our train the alpine green
After green, marking its time, attends
Above and the onion towers spin by in the noon;
How letters mail themselves and cures arrive
By mail; and how, if the light, as the day ends,
Stretches beneath the shadow-flinging trees,
It is tired as a whip lies, waiting. But throbbing on
Below the lovers in their blissful boskage, and the winds
Of midnight, sobbing like Ceres in the autumn dawn,
But always, echoes explore the cells where love
Consults the diet, comfort licks its wounds,
Death runs in its sleep and pain lies
Curled in a corner measuring life
With liquid eyes, and the barred and spiky
Protective beds can have
No time for hurry, and what is
More we may get to like it.

II

As I lay dreaming, on my back lay, a dove rose
Ravishing from my groin, two olives hung well from its beak,
Was simply peace.

And the dove begot begot begot as to it I spoke
In the enchanting tongue of the doves: having tasted blood,
It understood.

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O to its tune I followed, my eyes ever fixed ahead,
Though the hands of a woman pleaded at my feet and a god it was
Who to us prayed.

On the flat of a saucer valley I stood, where the hidden grass
Jostled with doves, and my cry that rose, that halloo'd back,
Could not reawake

The awake, the already awake, the always and crying awake.

III

Imagine that they speak:
It has been done before.
They have their midnight still,
The one star moving near
And all the midnight wide awake,
Brighter with one belief than one will
Ever imagine. Imagine:
"Believe Believe Believe"
To the trot and the champ and the shuffle,
The scratch, the wag, the shove,
Is all their beastly message,
Is all their naked love.

Believe then as the sheep
Veer as the dog believes
The shepherd's senseless Chook
Chook, *as the pigs in troughs*
And the colt to a dancing whip,
Keep faith, as the cat pursues its luck
In a thorny second over
And over and again;
As, in even the concert of panic
Or torn or caged alone,
Their fear assumes a motive
As flesh assures the bone.

I want. To simplify
My want in Circe's house,
Shrink to a humour yet
Support my human size,
Give credit gracefully, to be
At ease well, amply to cultivate
The uncultivated season
Before the awkward fall,
When the apple appealed to the palate
Alone, I want, and still
Upon myself to witness
Unseen over the wall.

Soot in their fleece and mud
Caking their fringes, past
Greed calm in appetite,
Wilfully the spook-faced
Sheep mince like victims of a mode,
Rocking their wiggy saddles, and eat;
The colt's mouth, creased at the corners,
Fumbles its natural feed;
The paired cats that appeal to the midnight
With more than infant need,
Keen over all the still-born;
And hobbling down the road,

Hindlegs akimbo with
A white arc stretched between,
Full to themselves, the pigs
Are classical old men
In long drawers who account for death
At four in the morning on thin legs,
Checking each lamp twice and winding
Every clock up tight. Fall
Of the rain, as its ranks take the railings
Like innocence, at will,
Makes us one for a second
Of its reminding chill;

But I, quicker than thought,
Am safe at home, the price
Of comfort simply paid,
Where food shall, with my ties,
Loved well, be tried for taste and wait
My becoming judgement; while outside,
Bunched under an eave, the oral
Herd stirs loosely to wreak
Its domestic revenges. The naked
Dog at my feet, whose weak
Warm eyes want a redeemer,
Imagines it can speak.

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Golo Mann

The Intellectuals

3. Germany

IN a short story by the German romantic poet, Clemens Bretano, the narrator (who is Bretano himself) is asked about his profession. For some reason, unclear even to himself, he cannot bring himself to say that he is a writer. And so, after some hesitation, he answers: Scribe. . . . That was around 1800. Some one hundred and thirty years later a German professor was challenged in his seminar to say what he thought of Ludwig Klages, a then well-known philosopher. "Klages," he answered, "I consider a genuine thinker, especially in his early writings. But why not be frank about it? Klages is on his own, a free-lance, without office, without secure income. So, in order to win his bread, he must create all kinds of sensations and write books which are sheer nonsense. If he were protected by a university, he would not have to write such stuff; besides, his colleagues would make life hard for him if he did. . . ."

How often have I heard similar views expressed—and frequently with less sympathy! There was nothing more respectable than the university professor; nothing more dubious, economically and morally, than the "intellectual," the "writer," the "man of letters." In Germany, to be taken seriously, one had to have an office, a rank, a title. That may be due, in part, to the Lutheran notion of a "calling"; in part to the fact that the country had a capital city only at rare moments of its history, so that a metropolitan public was lacking and the writer had to seek princely patronage, together with the office of librarian, preacher, tutor, theatre-manager, and the like. A free-lance publicist could hardly exist until late in the 19th century. When he finally emerged, the public looked at him as something foreign, bohemian, and probably subversive. Every *Studienrat* (teacher in a secondary school) felt superior to a Maximilian Harden or indeed, in retrospect, to a Heinrich Heine.

In contrast, the university professor was very near the top of the social pyramid even when he dealt with subjects—historical or literary criticism, social theory and general philosophy—which were not so far from the "intellectual's" fields of endeavour. He was a high servant of the State or, until the early 20th century, of his Prince; in old Austria he held the honorary rank of, I believe, colonel in the imperial army. Apart from his social rank, he has held a central place in the history of his country—which cannot be said of the free-lance writer. When, towards the end of the 18th century, there happened that expansion of intellectual forces on which the German mind has lived ever since, it was largely—not entirely—guided into academic channels. Kant in East Prussia, then Schelling in Bavaria, Fichte in Berlin, Hegel in Heidelberg and Berlin, all became immeasurable influences. Ever since, great professors have been intellectual leaders. They were the conservatives of the late Metternich period (Niebuhr, Ranke), the liberals of the eighteen-forties (Uhland, Dahlmann, Droysen), the Bismarckians (Treitschke, Sybel), the Wilhelminians (Harnack,

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Willamowitz, Sombart), the anti-Wilhelminians (Max Weber, Friedrich Meinecke). There were prose-writers of great power among them as well as men of almost self-caricaturing pompousness. I do not wish to imply that they were as a whole superior to their Western colleagues, that Mommsen was a greater writer than Boissier, or Treitschke than Seeley. But in Britain and France the university had competition; the great novelist, the successful man of letters far outshone the scholar. In Germany, the university enjoyed something like a monopoly of respectable intellectual existence. Schopenhauer, who was not a professor, was very proud but at the same time very bitter about it. Actually, he had tried to become one. So had Ludwig Feuerbach; so, even, had Karl Marx.

The position of the German professor has been slightly declining of late; partly because during the Hitler period he did not cut a very impressive figure; more generally because of that deep and broad process which, for the lack of a better term, we may call the Americanisation of German society. But even in 1954, a public opinion poll concerning the hierarchy of the various callings brought this unequivocal result: there is nothing higher than the university professor. He still ranks above the industrialist, the trade union leader, the parliamentarian. The same poll gave the writer a standing far below that of the teacher in an elementary school.

HIRED by the State to do a certain job, the professor recognised authority, Luther's *Obrigkeit*. He had nothing to do with politics, a well-known professor of philosophy once remarked in my presence.—But would you not try to help, when the house was afire?—No, he calmly answered, when the house was afire, he would call the firemen. To fight fire, to master a political or economic crisis, was a skill which had to be learned. He had not learned it, but had learned to philosophise. . . . If, however, the professor dealt with politics, it was the natural thing to do so in the interest of the State, to back up with historical arguments, say, the German mission of Prussia if he were teaching at a Prussian university.

There are great and numerous exceptions to this academic conformism. Rather, there was a period when it did not exist.

The Revolution of 1848 has been called (by Namier) the "Revolution of the Intellectuals," an appropriate term even for Germany. At that time, liberalism was chiefly represented by professors of whom, including the legists, some three hundred were sitting in the Frankfurt national assembly. The movement failed miserably. This settled the fate of the professors, in the eyes of the nation and even in their own. They no longer asked how society should be ordered but, rather, how things had come to pass as they had, and why they were quite as good as they were. Hegel triumphed over Kant, Bismarck over Hegel.

Meanwhile, the publicist, the man of letters who writes as he pleases, on any topic of his choosing but largely on politics, had made his belated appearance. It started with a bang during the Napoleonic time of trouble and immediately reached a very high point; more powerful editorials than those by Gentz, on the right, or by Goerres, on the left, Germany has never had a chance to read. In the early eighteen-thirties, the writers of the "Young-German" school were winning fame: less solemn than their predecessors, more "Western," urbane, frivolous. Their star is the immortal Heinrich Heine.

Heine—the German intellectual, if there ever was one. An emigré who preferred Paris to any city of his native country. A journalist who made his living mainly by reporting on France for German papers. A bohemian spendthrift, always in debt, taking money where it could be found, even from King Louis Phillipe. A philosopher of genius, but unsystematic, throwing out and wasting ideas as they came to him, in articles, essays, poems; unpredictable in philosophy and politics; playing with ideas but never entering a permanent alliance with any; prophetic as a commentator but not a mover of things historical; a socialist afraid of the "masses"; an aristocrat hating aristocracy; a rebel by birth and, there is no denying it, thoroughly subversive despite all his charm, his sadness, his personal conservatism; vulgar, at times truly infamous in his polemics; at the

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same time a poet, and a fine poet. It was exactly this last point which never ceased to puzzle the "true German" critic: how a fatherlandless scoundrel could write such beautiful poetry; how a German poet could lead such a worthless existence.

In truth, the influence of Heine was not entirely to the good. He was the inventor of a new style in political poetry, criticism, satire, aphoristic philosophy, travel reporting. He was an inventor of dazzling genius; but it proved easy to imitate him—including his various poses, his irresponsibility, egotism, frivolity, his hatreds, all his obvious tricks. After the great Heine there came many smaller ones, in the 19th and, even more, the early 20th century. A whole branch of the race of German intellectuals derives from Heine and its members have not helped us much. To them, the world was almost always wrong, especially the German world. Right was what they were pleased to choose; the "proletariat" (with which, in fact, they had dismally little to do), France, later the Soviet Union, above all the clique to which they belonged (as long as the main battle did not take place within the clique).

THE early 1840's also saw the appearance of another type of German intellectual, the "Young-Hegelian," the sociologist of the left. He (Bruno Bauer, Arnold Ruge, Ludwig Feuerbach, etc.) was less happy than the Heine type, for he was neither poet nor brilliant journalist. He was the professor *raté*, the sharp-witted, aggressive, and bitter social scientist whom the reactionary State would not employ and the public would not read. Free and independent these men were—independent, that is, from the State; but not independent of dreary worries, always forced to outbid one another and bitterly quarrelling among themselves. The greatest of them was Marx; who, having contributed his fair share of quarrelling and hating, could turn to his lasting achievements as an economist, thanks to the generosity of that prosperous industrialist, Engels. The sociologist of the far left, Marxian or semi-Marxian, had his heyday under the Weimar republic. At that time, the State did employ him. How much good it did to the democratic State, I shall not judge.

Of Bismarck it is known that he made an amazing offer to Marx: to write for him, with complete freedom to propagate Communism at the same time. That weird episode is characteristic of Bismarck's attitude towards the intellectual life of his time and his nation. He clearly did not belong to the race of the intellectuals. His memoirs, beautifully written as they are, have next to nothing to say about general problems, ideas, constitutional issues. Where he does say something about them, he makes sense; but it happens in barely one out of a hundred pages. The rest is all diplomacy, court-gossip, intrigues, administrative stuff, and malignant personal portraits. All the same, the arch-conservative Baron kept in touch with the intellectuals of the left. He won some of the bankrupt radicals of the 1848 period over to his service; he deeply enjoyed his secret conferences with Lassalle; he made the offer to Marx which has just been mentioned. In his old age he saw Harden at his table—that talented but profoundly dubious publicist of the Wilhelminian era. Bismarck felt lonely among the stiff bores of his own class. A brilliant conversationalist himself, he liked to converse with quick-witted men. Communist utopias he feared far less than the intrigues of his Emperor's wife. At ideas he laughed. But they could be used for propaganda purposes; tools to be picked up, tried out, and thrown away.

Bismarck's government gave work to some intellectuals, but did not elevate their status as a class—very far from it. Nor could they find a real chance of self-realisation in the political parties which now, at last, came into their own. These were not intellectuals' parties. They were interest-lobbies, decked out with some ideological claptrap. There were two exceptions: the Catholic Centre and the Social Democrats. The German Catholic intellectual has always had a spiritual home, a public to talk to, superiors to watch and to protect him; his fate has been enviable in this respect. The Social Democratic party was dedicated to a highly sophisticated theory, Marxism. It took professional intellectuals to create Marxism as well as to keep it alive, to interpret and revise

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it; while it took factory hands to create a workers' party. Hence the dualism within the party. Lassalle lamented the simplicity of his followers, "the many hard and hot hands" he had to shake; and one of his orders of the day, much to the hilarity of his enemies, began with the words: "Workingmen! Before I leave for the spas of Switzerland. . . ." His successor, Bebel, the true founder, an old worker himself, disliked brainy people. ("If a bourgeois wants to join you, look him over closely; if he is an intellectual, twice as closely.")

THERE had been a time in Germany when philosophers were near the government (Hegel), even when they were the government (Humboldt). There had been a time, the 1840's, when liberal intellectuals, while being excluded from the government, could reasonably hope to conquer it one day and when, therefore, they took Affairs of State seriously. So long as the State was authoritarian, anachronistic, obnoxious, there was hope that there would one day be a great, blessed change. But the State of the ageing Bismarck and of William II was in many ways no longer anachronistic. It was still authoritarian and military but also bourgeois; even the organised workers mustered considerable political influence. It was an efficient, powerful State, a prosperous, modern society. All the same, the State was stupid, the emperor ridiculous, the parties, including the socialist opposition, bureaucratic, ossified, uninspiring. Consequently, there developed something like a divorce between the political and the intellectual life of the nation, on various levels. Imperial Germany, with her princes, diplomats, court-preachers, generals, judges, industrialists, official poets, did not take notice of what was happening in the sphere of free thought. Nor was she taken notice of by the better writers; she was nothing to be worked for or fought against; at best, she could be ridiculed. On the other hand, political writers, critics, polemists, did not win much respect from their non-political colleagues, or from the nation as a whole, which considered them outlandish and completely negative. One must confess that the most famous publicists of the Wilhelminian era could not entirely refute this charge.

That intellectuals, like artists, are egotistical is a trivial fact. They want to succeed, to impress; and as what they are doing seems important to them, so do they who are doing it, and the more so when the world remains unmoved. It is a matter of degree. In a man like Ferdinand Lassalle, histrionic vanity had already reached striking proportions. In Maximilian Harden, in Alfred Kerr, in the Viennese Karl Kraus, it became maniacal and repulsive. Harden in his way understood diplomacy, Kraus the German language, Kerr the drama (he greatly helped the rise of Gerhart Hauptmann). But they were not fortunate influences, all three of them. Unbearably mannered in their style, sensationalist, apocalyptically hating and castigating each other as well as most people, they were negative representatives of the Wilhelminian period and did not really outlive it. For Kraus it can at least be said that he remained adamant in his pacifism during the First World War. Harden, like Kerr, turned to a hectic worship of war and power. It is a strange experience today to go through the pages of Harden's review, *Die Zukunft*. Brilliant they are at times, and not entirely without prophetic sense. But what an inflated lurid style! What lack of taste, of mere decency! And how stale the whole work!

In August 1914, the divorce between the intellectuals and the State came suddenly to an end, much to the satisfaction of the weaker, if not of the stronger partner. Those who had so far led the chilly intellectual life, away from the main stream, now jumped into the crowded waters of enthusiasm. Everybody, or almost everybody, wanted to share the wonderful experience—if not as a soldier, then with his pen. Psychological warfare-bureaux—the name did not yet exist—swallowed a good number of writers and lecturers. There were the notorious "war manifesto of the intellectuals," the battle cries of professors and poets, the songs of hatred; on the more serious side, the brilliant paradoxes of Thomas Mann's *Reflections of a Non-political Man*, the geopolitical phantasies of Friedrich Naumann, the warlike metaphysics of Max Scheler. It has been argued

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that by giving some meaning to a catastrophe which had none, but which was there in any case, the intellectuals did a service to the community. It depends how one looks at it. A Voltaire would find more folly than helpfulness in that *trahison des clercs*.

The so-called revolution of 1918–19 was more of a collapse than of a rising. At least, it created a power-vacuum and where this exists various people will try to step in and fill it with the embodiments of their ideas. Within the Social Democratic party the tough practical men triumphed over the radicals and restored law and order with the help of General Hindenburg. But there were regional upheavals of a more extreme character. If ever unpractical men played at revolution, it was the men who set up a soviet republic in Munich in March 1919: young intellectuals, fresh from Heidelberg university, who, with a little more luck, might have become disciples of Stefan George the poet, or of the sociologist Max Weber, the sterner, better man—in which case they might now be respected, grey-haired teachers somewhere in America. As it was, they became the victims, first of Marxism, then of Lenin's intoxicating example, and now the hour had come when they had to prove the solidity of their science of revolution. They perished in the attempt, some of them; one hates to imagine the writer Gustav Landauer, a fine Shakespeare scholar and an idealist, being beaten to death with rifle-butts by Prussian soldiers. In justice, one must add that these idealists tried to do what was none of their business, that many of them were foreigners in Bavaria and even in Germany, that their attempt was utterly rootless, hopeless, senseless from the start, and that they should not have done it. The notion, popular in Germany ever since 1848, of the crazy, obnoxious *Literat* who should be kept out of politics by any means, if necessary with rifle-butts, has been greatly strengthened by this tragic adventure.

From that time on, there was no escape from politics. To have one's say about the world situation, the crisis, the future of civilisation, the past war and the next one, became the intellectual's normal endeavour—even the anti-political intellectual's. The philosophy which came to be called the "Conservative Revolution," was itself political; highly contradictory, to be sure, vague, dynamic, but anti-constitutional and political nevertheless. Their representatives, much as they despised *littérateurs* and the craft of writing books, expressed their contempt in books which they wrote and they clearly lived the life of *littérateurs*; the terrible Oswald Spengler not being an exception.

The middle-of-the-roaders continued Germany's humanist, liberal, and European tradition. They were republicans, democrats, protagonists of a lasting Franco-German understanding, the League of Nations, Count Coudenhove's Pan-Europe, progress without revolution, and so on. Not that the republic, as a whole, had much use for them. The political parties which now ruled directly, no longer through bargaining with an imperial government, had changed their names rather than their character after the Kaiser's abdication. They were as uninspiring as before and so were Weimar's heads of government: elderly administrators, former city managers, financiers, industrialists, bureaucrats, at best trade-unionists. They were as foreign to the German literature of their age as Bismarck had been and with less justification; German literature had been stale and mediocre in Bismarck's time, while it was very much alive in the nineteen-twenties. The man of experience who gets things done, as against the scribbler who moves whole worlds in his mind while in reality he does not know a marriage certificate from a wage contract—that, essentially, was their attitude, as it had been Bismarck's before them.

Exceptions are worth mentioning, although they do not disprove the rule. Rathenau, foreign minister in 1922, was a rare combination of industrialist and philosopher, an intellectual with tremendous practical achievements to his credit. He was also an outsider in the government, suspected and blindly hated by a large sector of the nation exactly because he was an intellectual, and a Jew to boot; I remember what joyful noise we schoolboys made when we learned about his assassination. Stresemann made at least one brave effort to

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show his interest in the world of books. A Prussian minister of education, C. H. Becker, went so far as to found the institution which came to be called the "Prussian Writers' Academy." (Its exact name was "Prussian Academy of the Arts, Section for Literature.") It was an attempt to make writing something official, like in France, to give the man of letters a dignified place in the state. Alas, few people took the Prussian Writers' Academy seriously. It was considered as republican, as purposeless, and, not entirely without reason, as a flat imitation of the French Academy.

On the far Left we find, apart from the Communists, the non-committed leftist intellectual, Heine's heir. He had ridiculed the Kaiser, now he ridiculed the republic which evidently was not lacking in pathetic aspects—though, being better in her potentialities than anything that might succeed her, she would nevertheless have deserved help, rather than hilarious contempt. Heine's heir lived from saying No; from accusing, unmasking, and putting the world in the wrong, a function which gave a secure superiority to the accuser. Indeed, one could hardly see how things could ever improve unless he himself were given command—the slimmest chance of which would have made him run for cover.

What an intellectual Babylon of voices, that Weimar Republic! Talking of decline, of crisis, of doom—but joyful talking. Philosophers demonstrating that there was no longer time for any philosophy, sociologists unmasking all creeds, values, moral standards as "ideological," economists calmly proving that five or six million unemployed had come to stay and would not be gotten rid of in any future, legists affirming that the very notion of natural justice was a hoax and that any positive law, duly codified, was as good as any other—far too many people assiduously sawing off the branch on which other people or they themselves were sitting. There was then, I should say, too much intellectual freedom in Germany; and all of a sudden there was none.

MOST modes of life have their characteristic temptations, and so has that of the intellectuals, academic or other. The German intellectuals have given in to them as much as have the intellectuals of other countries, to say the least.

There is the pretention to know what cannot and must not be known, the secret law of the ages:—We understand the past, the present, the future, we have the key to it, we or someone we choose to follow. We understand Necessity. We also know that Necessity is good, was good, shall be good. Or again, that the notions of good and bad make no sense when applied to the Inevitable. Hence we are far above the many who ignore where they are going and think they are free to choose, poor fellows. . . .

If this presumption of looking behind the stage of history and discovering the strings which are pulling the actors is characteristic of certain writers everywhere, it is especially characteristic of a large sector of the German mind: the Hegelians, the Marxians, the Spenglerians, and a host of lesser schools and men. There is a profound lack of charity connected with it, as the French critic, Edgar Quinet, noticed already in the eighteen-thirties.

These are the yes-men. There are also the no-men—those who, confronted by history, past or in the making, put on a permanently hurt look. With a little reason, everything could have been straightened out; but it was not and there is little hope that it ever will. Because the rulers are so stupid. . . . This feeling of a considerable superiority is something that yes-men and no-men have in common. Similar also are the practical consequences of both attitudes. The yes-men see no need for, the no-men no hope in, strenuous limited efforts of their own. On a more restricted level, the contrast between the yes-men and the no-men appears in the attitude towards one's own nation. German intellectuals were either of an aggressive patriotism or of a cosmopolitanism marked by a supercritical, if not hostile and contemptuous, view of their own nation. The golden mean did exist, of course, but not as naturally as in Britain and France. (America is a different story.)

Related to this is the polarity between the "Western" and the "Pure German" intellectual, which goes back to the beginnings of

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modern Germany. To be a free publicist—say, the editor of a politico-philosophical review in Berlin in 1795—meant to imitate French and English styles; for there was no German model to work on. Ever since, the free intellectual has had a somewhat outlandish, Western air around him. Frequently he did imitate Anglo-Saxon and French examples, both in what he had to say and in the way he said it. For this the great progressive papers of the Wilhelminian and Weimar period, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*, are striking instances. The reaction is equally old. When a Prussian baron, Achim von Arnim, founded his "Christian Round-Table" in Berlin around 1810, it was, I think, the first attempt to organise an intellectual milieu which would be purely Germanic. Jews, Frenchmen, and friends of France were rigorously excluded from von Arnim's club; and its members, like Heinrich von Kleist, may be said to represent a new type of German writer: highly poetical, at the same time savagely political and nationalist, the producer of ideas about State and Nation which could not be identified with any Western tradition. The conflict between the two German intellectual schools, the Western and the Germanic, has been going on ever since, among various groups, around various issues.

The Westerner easily passed for subversive, merely negative, socially useless if not dangerous, a dubious product of metropolitan swamps. So did the Jewish intellectual; and both were identified for all practical purposes. Already, around 1800, literary critics who were not Jewish were jokingly referred to as "indirect Jews." Nobody but the Jews had made Bonaparte an emperor, a German patriot complained; as they were supposed one hundred and twenty years later to have caused Germany's defeat in the First World War through their diabolic machinations.

There is a grain of substance behind such nonsense. Among German intellectuals of the Western type, the Jewish percentage has been high, for good historical reasons. The Western intellectual, following his French prototype, did throw in his lot with the causes of progress, democracy, free science, positivism, socialism, and so on. That great movement, having its negative as well as its constructive aspects, its intellectual backers can be rightly charged with both, and sometimes, according to their character, more with the one than with the other. It was, I believe, de Maistre—also Burke—who predicted that the progressive intellectual was making a mistake from the point of view of his own interest; that his natural place was with the aristocracy and the church; and that, having helped to destroy the old order, he would not find in the new that worthy position of which he was dreaming. There have been moments in recent history when de Maistre's prediction seemed sagacious enough—exceptional moments, we hope.

SOMEHOW, most of us expected that the history of the nineteen-twenties would repeat itself after 1945. The humanists made ready to fight the nationalists once again; the apocalyptics pulled their manuscripts out of the drawer where they had been hiding since 1933, to renew their prophecies about the decline of the West, the destruction of man by the machine, and so on. Nobody was prepared for the West-Germany we have today, that incredibly busy, prosperous, crowded, pleasure-seeking place; least of all the intellectuals. It happened that way. And as it happened, intellectual positions changed, as well as functions.

One can still hear the complaint that the writer has no respected place. The President of the Federal Republic himself is making regretful allusions to this fact. On the other hand—there are always other hands—the intellectual can keep himself busy enough, what with all those congresses, public discussions, summer-schools, publicity and self-publicity campaigns, Unesco, Franco-German reconciliation, Pan-Europe, cultural attachéships, trips to America, exchange services and, above all, the radio, that inexhaustible market for words. As a man above or outside society, prophet or bohemian, he will find life unrewarding. As a member of a consumers' society he can win a market for his goods and services; and then he can do what any German likes to do nowadays: marry young, rent an apartment, perhaps

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own a car, live a regular life. If he is talented and clever, he will write novels on topical subjects which have a chance to appear in an *Illustrierte* and to become best-sellers—the only way for a novel to pay its way. He will work for the radio, the press, if he is very lucky for the movies. In any case, his work is a job like another, nothing particularly solemn; not the writing of "doomsday accounts of our souls," as Ibsen defined the art of the writer. There are still those who write for the sake of truth rather than with their eyes on the market. But they are few and their readers are few; a fine highbrow review like *Merkur* barely sells 3,000 copies. The broad cultured and leisured public which existed in Wilhelminian and pre-Hitler days is gone—in that public, too, the Jews had a very high percentage.

One should add that both spheres, that of the intellectual entertainment industry and that of the absolute creative effort, are still connected at various points. Some find energy enough to participate in both, and the radio gives generous support to higher literature through its "night-studios" and other special offerings comparable to the BBC's Third Programme. As a whole, however, the situation of the German intellectual tends to become similar to that of his American colleague—minus the colleges, those great if none too comfortable refuges of the American highbrow. The German secondary schools (Gymnasiums) are still almost completely isolated from intellectual life, traditionalist, narrow, bureaucratic. Universities are few, tightly organised, and very much afraid of overstaffing their faculties.

Where there is no market for a Spengler, no Spengler will appear. Today, the prophets of doom are silent; those of a "Conservative Revolution," a purified spartan German community, hardly audible. Silent is their counterpart, the "leftist intellectual," Heine's heir, who has practically vanished from the German scene. (He leads a ghostly and distrusted existence in the Eastern Zone, filling the pages of the same red-covered weekly, *Die Weltbuehne*, with the same giggling vituperations as in 1925.) A left there is, but not a very literary one; trade unions which, through well-trained economists and well-paid lawyers, are studying the theoretical basis for their action. The age-old conflict between the Western and the "pure German" intellectual has died down, for everybody is somehow pro-Western now and everybody a good German to boot. Gone are the passionate polemics of the Weimar period, the sensational propositions, the mutual accusations. A cool but general agreement on the essentials prevails, as between parties in parliament so between intellectuals. Politics itself is no longer in the centre of interest, not even for those who are unhappy over Adenauer's Germany, who think her materialistic, business-dominated, unimaginative, reactionary, and what not. Theirs is an esoteric community and the values they serve are not to be realised by any political action. It is nothing but the old *l'art pour l'art*—an unmistakable symptom of normalcy, of a stable society.

These symptoms may delude us. Normalcy, after all, is itself something abnormal when balanced against the crazy Berlin situation, the Eastern Zone, the Oder-Neisse frontier, and all the monstrosities of a still recent past. When one remembers the Germany of nine or eleven years ago—some do—the present appears as if created by witchcraft. That country has surprised us before; it may do it again. But the present is what it is, and looking at the way the Germans are building, they seem to trust the future.

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Invocation upon the Deaths of Great Men

THEIR day was eloquent: morning was the spun
blue savagery of wind, and noon the call
of trumpeters to lions. Triumph undone,
warm in the ebb of bee-light was begun
their dying: colour of autumn; the grey scrawl
of ash-of-apricot upon the wall,
that names us weighed and finds us wanting. *Seal*
their sunlight on our dark, you who appal
our closing landscape—moon, their mirror of steel,
oh face of Lazarus, look down and heal.

They died among their jewelled evening: none
to hear their anger, feel or hear at all
the honey and lions'-mating of their sun,
grow sour and impotent. But one by one
the alien lesser stars dare and grow tall—
night's peacock, light of the gnat's voice. *In our hall*
of kneeling shadows, give us *grace to kneel*
self-*shadowed. Angel or eagle or animal:*
moon, from the wasting of your cherub wheel,
oh face of Lazarus, look down and heal.

Not in this nightyear may their cataract stun
with honey of wrath of thunder of carnival
by golden milk. But we, the million
trillings of little silver, glitter and run
and whimper through the dark: we are the small
vibrations of dead music, we must crawl
through strings we cannot sound. *You who repeal*
the deaths of suns—you their memorial—
even such waking lemures you anele:
oh face of Lazarus, look down and heal.

Fierce blazon upon earth, armorial
colours we cannot fire—we stoop and reel
under the sea-weight of your weapons; fall
by theft of honour. *Moon whose moons we steal—*
oh face of Lazarus, look down and heal.

Terence Tiller

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Kingsley Amis: My Enemy's Enemy

a story

"YES, I know all about that, Tom," the Adjutant said through a mouthful of stew. "But technical qualifications aren't everything. There's other sides to a Signal officer's job, you know, especially while we're still pretty well static. The communications are running themselves and we don't want to start getting complacent. My personal view is and has been from the word go that your friend Dally's a standing bloody reproach to this unit, never mind how much he knows about the six-channel and the other boxes of tricks. That's a lineman-mechanic's job, anyway, not an officer's. And I can tell you for a fact I mean to do something about it, do you see?" He laid down his knife, though not his fork, and took three or four swallows of wine.

"Well, your boy Cleaver doesn't impress me all that much, Bill," Thurston, who hated the Adjutant, said to him. "The only time we've tried him on duty he flapped."

"Just inexperience, Tom," the Adjutant said. "He'd soon snap out of that if we gave him command of the section. Sergeant Beech would carry him until he found his feet."

"Mm, I'd like to see that, I must say. The line duty-officer getting his sergeant out of

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bed to hold his hand while he changes a valve."

"Now look here, old boy." The Adjutant levered a piece of meat out from between two teeth and ate it. "You know as well as I do that young Cleaver's got the best technical qualifications of anyone in the whole unit. It's not his fault he's been stuck on office work ever since he came to us. There's a fellow that'd smarten up that bunch of goons and long-haired bloody mathematical wizards they call a line-maintenance section. As it is, the N.C.O.s don't chase the blokes and Dally isn't interested in chasing the N.C.O.s. Isn't interested in anything but his bloody circuit diagrams and test-frames and what-have-you."

To cover his irritation, Thurston summoned the Mess corporal, who stood by the wall in a posture that compromised between that of an attendant waiter and the regulation stand-at-ease position. The Adjutant had schooled him in Mess procedure, though not in Mess etiquette. "Gin and lime, please, Gordon. . . . Just as well in a way he is interested in line apparatus, isn't it, Bill? We'd have looked pretty silly without him during the move out of Normandy and across France. He worked as hard as any two of the rest of us. And as well."

"He got his bouquet from the Colonel, didn't he? I don't grudge him that, I admit he did good work then. Not as good as some of his chaps, probably, but still, he served his turn. Yes, that's exactly it, Tom, he's served his——"

"According to Major Rylands he was the linchpin of the whole issue," Thurston said, lighting a cigarette with fingers that were starting to tremble. "And I'm prepared to take his word for it. The war isn't over yet, you know. Christ knows what may happen in the spring. If Dally isn't around to hold the line-maintenance end up for Rylands, the whole unit might end up in the muck with the Staff jumping on its back. Cleaver might be all right, I agree. We just can't afford to take the risk."

This was an unusually long speech for anyone below the rank of major to make in the Adjutant's presence. Temporarily gagged by a mouthful of stew, that officer was eating as fast as he could and shaking his forefinger to indicate that he would as soon as possible propose some decisive amendment to what he had just been told. With his other hand he scratched the crown of his glossy black head, looking momentarily like a tic-tac man working through his lunch-break. He said indistinctly: "You're on to the crux of the whole thing, old boy. Rylands is the root of all the trouble. Bad example at the top, do you see?" Swallowing, he went on: "If the second-in-command goes round looking like a latrine detail and calling the blokes by their Christian names, what can you expect? You can't get away from it, familiarity breeds contempt. Trouble with him is he thinks he's still working in the Post Office."

A hot foam of anger seemed to fizz up in Thurston's chest. "Major Rylands is the only field officer in this entire unit who knows his job. It is due to him and Dally, plus Sergeant Beech and the lineman-mechs., that our line communications have worked so smoothly during this campaign. To them and to no one else. If they can go on doing that they can walk about with bare arses for all I care."

The Adjutant frowned at Thurston. After running his tongue round his upper teeth, he said: "You seem to forget, Tom, that I'm responsible for the discipline of officers in this unit." He paused to let the other reflect on the personal implications of this, then nodded to where Corporal Gordon was approaching with Thurston's drink.

As he signed the chit, Thurston was thinking that Gordon had probably been listening to the conversation from the passage. If so, he would probably discuss it with Hill, the Colonel's batman, who would probably report it to his master. It was often said, especially by Lieutenant Dalessio, the "Dally" now under discussion, that the Colonel's chief contact with his unit was through the rumours and allegations Hill and, to a less extent, the Adjutant took to him. A tweak of disquiet made Thurston drink deeply and resolve to say no more for a bit.

The Adjutant was brushing crumbs off his battledress, which was of the greenish hue cur-

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rent in the Canadian Army. This little affectation, like the gamboge gloves and the bamboo walking-stick, perhaps suited a man who had helped to advertise men's clothes in civilian life. He went on to say in his rapid quacking monotone: "I'd advise you, Tom, not to stick your neck out too far in supporting a man who's going to be out of this unit on his ear before very long."

"Rylands, you mean?"

"No no no. Unfortunately not. But Dally's going."

"That's gen, is it?"

"Not yet, but it will be."

"I don't follow you."

The Adjutant looked up in Gordon's direction, then leaned forward across the table to Thurston. "It only needs one more thing," he said quietly, "to turn the scale. The C.O.'s been watching Dally for some time, on my suggestion. I know the old man pretty well, as you know, after being in his company for three years at North Midland Command. He's waiting to make up his mind, do you see? If Dally puts up a black in the near future—a real black—that'll be enough for the C.O. Cleaver'll get his chance at last."

"Suppose Dally doesn't put up a black?"

"He will."

"He hasn't yet, you know. The terminal equipment's all on the top line, and Dally knows it inside out."

"I'm not talking about that kind of a black. I'm talking about the administrative and disciplinary side. Those vehicles of his are in a shocking condition. I thought of working a snap 406 inspection on one of them, but that wouldn't look too good. Too much like discrimination. But there'll be something. Just give me time."

Thurston thought of saying that those vehicles, though covered with months-old mud and otherwise offensive to the inspecting eye, were in good running order, thanks to the efficiency of the section's transport corporal. Instead, he let his mind wander back to one of the many stories of the Colonel's spell as a company commander in England. Three weeks running he had presented his weekly prize of £1 for the smartest vehicle to the driver of an obsolete wireless-truck immobilised for lack of spare parts. The company sergeant-major had won a bet about it.

"We'll have some fun then, Tom old boy," the Adjutant was saying in as festive a tone as his voice allowed. He was unaware that Thurston disliked him. His own feelings towards Thurston were a mixture of respect and patronage: respect for Thurston's Oxford degree and accent, job at a minor public school, and efficiency as a non-technical officer; patronage for his practice of reading literary magazines and for his vaguely scholarly manner and appearance. The affinity between Thurston's unmilitary look and the more frankly ragamuffin demeanour of Dalessio could hardly explain, the Adjutant wonderingly felt, the otherwise unaccountable tendency of the one to defend the other. It was true that they'd known each other at the officers' training unit at Catterick, but what could that have to do with it? The Adjutant was unaccustomed to having his opinions contested and he now voiced the slight bafflement that had been growing on him for the last few minutes. "It rather beats me," he said, "why you're taking this line about friend Dally. You're not at all thick with him. In fact he seems to needle you whenever he speaks to you. My impression is, old boy, for what it's worth, you've got no bloody use for him at all. And yet you stick up for him. Why?"

Thurston amazed him by saying coldly: "I don't see why the fact that a man's an Italian should be held against him when he does his job as well as anyone in the sodding Army."

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"Just a minute, Tom," the Adjutant said, taking a cigarette from his silver case, given him by his mistress in Brussels. "That's being a bit unfair, you know. You ever heard me say a word about Dalessio being an Eyeteye? Never. You were the one who brought it up. It makes no difference to me if a fellow's father's been interned, provided——"

"Uncle."

"All right, uncle, then. As I say, that's no affair of mine. Presumably he's okay from that point of view or he'd never have got here. And that's all there is to it as far as I'm concerned. I'm not holding it against him, not for a moment. I don't quite know where you picked up that impression, old boy."

Thurston shook his head, blushing slightly. "Sorry, Bill," he said. "I must have got it mixed. It used to get on my wick at Catterick, the way some of the blokes took it out of him about his pal Musso and so on. I suppose it must be through that somehow, in a way, I keep feeling people have got it in for him on that score. Sorry." He was not sorry. He knew quite certainly that his charge was well-founded, and that the other's silence about Dalessio's descent was a matter of circumspection only. If anyone in the Mess admired Mussolini, Thurston suspected, it was the Adjutant, although he kept quiet about that as well. It was tempting to dig at his prejudices on these and other questions, but Thurston did his best never to succumb to that temptation. The Adjutant's displeasure was always strongly urged and sometimes, rumour said, followed up by retaliatory persecution. Enough, dangerously much, had already been said in Dalessio's defence.

The Adjutant's manner had grown genial again and, with a muttered apology, he now offered Thurston a cigarette. "What about another of those?" he asked, pointing his head at Thurston's glass.

"Thank you, I will, but I must be off in a minute. We're opening that teleprinter to the Poles at twenty-hundred and I want to see it's working."

Two more officers now entered the Mess dining-room. They were Captain Bentham, a forty-year-old Regular soldier who had been a company sergeant-major in India at the outbreak of war, and Captain Rowney, who besides being in charge of the unit's administration was also the Mess's catering officer. Rowney nodded to Thurston and grinned at the Adjutant, whose Canadian battledress he had been responsible for securing. He himself was wearing a sheepskin jacket, made on the Belgian black market. "Hello William," he said. "Won the war yet?" Although he was a great chum of the Adjutant's, some of his remarks to him, Thurston had noticed, carried a curious vein of satire. Bentham sat stolidly down a couple of places along the table, running his hands over his thin grey hair.

"Tom and I have been doing a little plotting," the Adjutant said. "We've decided a certain officer's career with this unit needs terminating."

Bentham glanced up casually and caught Thurston's eye. This, coming on top of the Adjutant's misrepresentation of the recent discussion, made Thurston feel slightly uncomfortable. That was ludicrous, because he had long ago written Bentham off as of no particular account, as the most uninteresting type of Regular Army ex-ranker, good only at cable-laying, supervising cable-laying and looking after the men who did the actual cable-laying. Despite this, Thurston found himself saying: "It wasn't quite like that," but at that moment Rowney asked the Adjutant a question and the protest, mild as it was, went unheard.

"Your friend Dally, of course," the Adjutant answered Rowney.

"Why, what's he been up to?" Bentham

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asked in his slow Yorkshire voice. "Having his hair cut?"

There was a general laugh, then a token silence while Gordon laid plates of stew in front of the new arrivals. His inquiry whether the Adjutant wanted any rice pudding was met with a facetious and impracticable instruction for the disposal of that foodstuff by an often-quoted route. "Can't you do better than that, Jack?" the Adjutant asked Rowney. "Third night we've had Chinese wedding-cake this week."

"Sorry, William. My Belgian friend's had a little misunderstanding with the civvy police. I'm still looking round for another pal with the right views on how the officers of a liberating army should be fed. Just possess your soul in patience."

"What's this about Dally?" Bentham persisted. "If there's a move to give him a wash and a change of clothes, count me in."

Thurston got up before the topic could be reopened. "By the way, Jack," he said to Rowney, "young Malone asked me to remind you that he still hasn't had those cigarettes for the blokes he's lent to Special Wireless."

Rowney sighed. "Tell him it's not my pigeon, will you, Thomas? I've been into it all with him. They're under Special Wireless for everything now."

"Not NAAFI rations. He told me you'd agreed to supply them."

"Up until last week. They're off my hands now."

"Oh no they're not," Thurston said nastily. "According to Malone they still haven't had last week's."

"Well, tell him . . ."

"Look, Jack, you tell him. It's nothing to do with me, is it?"

Rowney stared at him. "All right, Thomas," he said, abruptly diving his fork into his stew. "I'll tell him."

Dodging the hanging lampshade, which at its lowest point was no more than five feet from the floor, Thurston hurried out, his greatcoat over his arm.

"What's eating our intellectual friend?" Rowney asked.

The Adjutant rubbed his blue chin. "Don't know quite. He was behaving rather oddly before you blokes came in. He's getting too sort of wrapped up in himself. Needs shaking up." He was just deciding, having previously decided against it, to inflict some small but salutary injustice on Thurston through the medium of unit orders. He might compel the various sections to start handing in their various stores records for check, beginning with Thurston's section and stopping after it. Nice, but perhaps a bit too drastic. What about pinching his jeep for some tiresome extra duty? That might be just the thing.

"If you ask me," Bentham was saying, "he's too bloody stuck-up by half. Wants a lesson of some kind, he does."

"You're going too far there, Ben," the Adjutant said decisively. He disliked having Bentham in the Officers' Mess, declaring its tone to be thereby lowered, and often said he thought the old boy would be much happier back in the Sergeants' Mess with people of his own type. "Tom Thurston's about the only chap round here you can carry on a reasonable intelligent discussion with."

Bentham, unabashed, broke off a piece of bread and ran it round his plate in a way that Thurston and the Adjutant were, unknown to each other, united in finding unpleasant. "What's all this about a plot about Dally?" he asked.

"You got that, Reg?" Dalessio asked. "If you get any more interference on this circuit, put it back on plain speech straight away. Then they can see how they like that. I don't believe for a bloody moment the line's been relaid for a single bastard yard. Still, it's being ceased in a week or two, and it never was of the slightest importance, so there's no real worry. Now, what about the gallant Poles?" He spoke with a strong Glamorganshire accent diversified by an occasional Italian vowel.

"They're still on here," Reg, the lineman-mechanic, said, gesturing towards the test teleprinter. "Want to see 'em?"

"Yes please. It's nearly time to switch 'em through to the teleprinter room. We'll get that done before I go."

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Reg bent to the keyboard of the machine and typed:

HOW U GETTING ON THERE READING ME OK KKKK

There was a humming pause while Reg scratched his armpit and said: "Gone for a piss, I expect. . . . Ah, here he is." In typical but inextinguishably eerie fashion the teleprinter took on a life of its own, performed a carriage-return, moved the glossy white paper up a couple of lines, and typed:

4 CHRISTS SAKE QUIT BOTHERING ME NOT 2000 HRS YET KKK

Dalessio, grinning to himself, shoved Reg out of the way and typed:

CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER BRITISH LIBERATION ARMY ERE WATCH YR LANGUAGE MY MAN KKKK

The distant operator typed:

U GO AND —— YRSELF JACK SORRY I MEAN SIR

At this Dalessio went into roars of laughter, digging his knuckle into one deep eye-socket and throwing back his large dark head. It was exactly the kind of joke he liked best. He rotated a little in the narrow aisle between the banks of apparatus and test-panels, still laughing, while Reg watched him with a slight smile. At last Dalessio recovered and shouldered his way down to the phone at the other end of the vehicle.

"Give me the teleprinter room, please. What? Who? All right, I'll speak to him. . . . Terminal Equipment, Dalessio here. Yes. Oh, really? It hasn't?" His voice changed completely, became that of a slightly unbalanced uncle commiserating with a disappointed child: "Now isn't that just too bad? Well, I do think that's hard lines. Just when you were all excited about it, too, eh?" Over his shoulder he squealed to Reg, in soprano parody of Thurston's educated tones: "Captain Thurston is tewwibly gwieved that he hasn't got his pwinter to the Poles yet. He's afwaid we've got some howwid scheme on over heah to depwive him of it. . . . All right, Thurston, I'll come over. Yes, now."

Reg smiled again and put a cigarette in his mouth, striking the match, from long habit, on the metal "No Smoking" notice tacked up over the ventilator.

"Give me one of those, Reg, I want to cool my nerves before I go into the beauty-parlour across the way. Thanks. Now listen: switch the Poles through to the teleprinter room at one minute to eight exactly, so that there's working communication at eight but not before. Do Thurston good to bite his nails for a few minutes. Put it through on number . . ." —his glance and forefinger went momentarily to a test-frame across the aisle—"number six. That's just been rewired. Ring up Teleprinters and tell 'em, will you? See you before I go off."

It was dark and cold outside and Dalessio shivered on his way over to the signal office. He tripped up on the cable which ran shin-high between a line of blue-and-white posts outside the entrance, and applied an unclean expression to the Adjutant, who had had this amenity provided in an attempt to dignify the working area. Inside the crowded, brilliantly-lighted office, he was half-asphyxiated by the smoke from the stove and half-deafened by the thumping of date-stamps, the ringing of telephones, the enraged bark of one sergeant and the loud, tremulous singing of the other. A red-headed man was rushing about bawling "Emergency Ops for Z Corps" in the accents of County Cork. Nobody took any notice of him: they had all dealt with far too many Emergency Ops messages in the last eight months.

THURSTON was in his office, a small room partitioned off from the main one. The unit was occupying what had once been a Belgian military school and later an S.S. training establishment. This building had obviously formed part of the original barrack area, and Thurston often wondered what whim of the Adjutant's had located the offices and stores down here and the men's living-quarters in former offices and stores. The cubicle where Thurston spent so much of his time had no doubt been the abode of the cadet, and then *Unteroffizier*, in charge of barrack-room. He was fond of imagining the heavily-built Walloons and high-cheeked Prussians who had slept in here, and had insisted on preserving as a historical document the chalked *Wir kommen*

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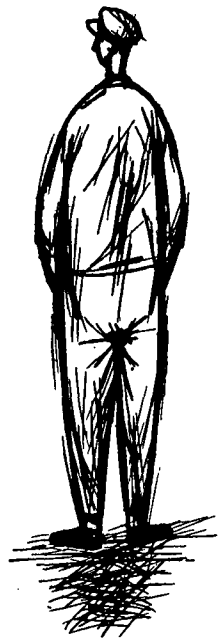
zurück on the plank wall. Like his predecessors, he fancied, he felt cut off from all the life going on just outside the partition, somehow isolated. "Alone, withouten any company," he used to quote to himself. He would laugh then, sometimes, and go on to think of the unique lavatory at the far end of the building, where the defecator was required to plant his feet on two metal plates, grasp two handles, and curve his body into the shape of a bow over a kind of trough.

He was not laughing now. His phone conversation with Dalessio had convinced him, even more thoroughly than phone conversations with Dalessio commonly did, that the other despised him for his lack of technical knowledge and took advantage of it to irritate and humiliate him. He tried to re-read a letter from one of the two married women in England with whom, besides his wife, he was corresponding, but the thought of seeing Dalessio still troubled him.



Actually seeing Dalessio troubled him even more. Not for the first time it occurred to him that Dalessio's long, matted hair, grease-spotted, cylindrical trouser-legs and ill-fitting battle-dress blouse were designed as an offensive burlesque of his own neat but irremediably civilian appearance. He was smoking, too, and Thurston himself was punctilious in observing inside his office the rule that prohibited smoking on duty until ten at night, but it was no use telling him to put it out. Dalessio, he felt, never obeyed orders unless it suited him. "Hallo, Thurston," he said amiably. "Not still having a baby about the Poles, I hope?"

"I don't think I ever was, was I? I just wanted to make sure what the position was."

"Oh, you wanted to make sure of that, did you? All right, then. It's quite simple. Physically, the circuit remains unchanged, of course. But, as you know, we have ways of providing extra circuits by means of electrical apparatus, notably by utilising the electron-radiating properties of the thermionic valve, or vacuum-tube. If a signal is applied to the grid . . ."

Thurston's phone rang and he picked it up gratefully. "Signal-master?" said the voice of Brigadier the Lord Fawcett, the largest and sharpest thorn in the side of the entire Signals unit. "I want a special despatch-rider to go to Brussels for me. Will you send him round to my office for briefing in ten minutes?"

Thurston considered. Apart from its being over a hundred miles to Brussels, he suspected that the story told by previous special D.R.s who had been given this job was probably quite true: the purpose of the trip was to take in the Brigadier's soiled laundry and bring back the clean stuff, plus any wines, spirits and cigars that the Brigadier's Brussels agent, an R.A.S.C. colonel at the headquarters of the reserve Army Corps, might have got together for him. But he could hardly ask the Lord Fawcett to confirm this. Why was it that his army career seemed littered with such problems? "The regular D.R. run goes out at oh-five-hundred, sir," he said in a conciliatory tone. "Would that do instead, perhaps?"

"No, it certainly would not do instead. You have a man available, I take it?"

"Oh yes, sir." This was true. It was also true that the departure of this man with the dirty washing would necessitate another, who might have been driving all day, being got out of the section billet and condemned at best to a night on the signal-office floor, more likely to a run half across Belgium in the small hours with a genuine message of some kind. "Yes, we have a man."

"Well, I'm afraid in that case I don't see your difficulty. Get him round to me right away, will you?"

"Very good, sir." There was never anything one could do.

"Who was that?" Dalessio asked when Thurston had rung off.

"Brigadier Fawcett," Thurston said unguardedly. But Dally probably didn't know

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about the laundry rumour. He had little to do with the despatch-rider sections.

"Oh, the washerwoman's friend. I heard a bit about that from Beech. Not on the old game again, is he? Sounded as if he wanted a special D.R. to me."

"Yes, he did." Thurston raised his voice: "Prosser!"

"Sir!" came from outside the partition.

"Ask Sergeant Baker to come and see me, will you?"

"Sir."

Dalessio's large pale face became serious. He pulled at his moustache. Eventually he said: "You're letting him have one, are you?" If asked his opinion of Thurston, he would have described him as a plausible bastard. His acquiescence in such matters as this, Dalessio would have added, was bloody typical.

"I can't do anything else."

"I would. There's nothing to it. Get God's Adjutant on the blower and complain. He's an ignorant bugger, we know, but I bet he'd take this up."

Thurston had tried this, only to be informed at length that the job of Signals was to give service to the Staff. Before he could tell Dalessio about it, Baker, the D.R. sergeant, arrived to be acquainted with the Lord Fawcett's desires. Thurston thought he detected a glance of protest and commiseration pass between the other two men. When Baker had gone, he turned on Dalessio almost savagely and said: "Now look, Dally, leaving aside the properties of the thermionic bleeding valve, would you kindly put me in the picture about this teleprinter to the Poles? Is it working or isn't it? Quite a bit of stuff has piled up for them and I've been holding it in the hope the line'll be through on time."

"No harm in hoping," Dalessio said. "I hope it'll be working all right, too." He dropped his fag-end on the swept floor and trod on it.

"Is it working or is it not?" Thurston asked very loudly. His eyes wandered up and down the other's fat body, remembering how it had looked in a pair of shorts, doing physical training at the officers' training unit. It had proved incapable of the simplest tasks laid upon it, crumpling feebly in the forward-roll exercise, hanging like a crucified sack from the wall-bars, climbing by slow and ugly degrees over the vaulting-horse. Perhaps its owner had simply not felt like exerting it. That would have been bloody typical.

Before Dalessio could answer, a knock came at the plywood door Thurston had had made for his cubicle. In response to the latter's bellow, the red-headed man came in. "Sergeant Fleming sent to tell you, sir," he said, "we're just after getting them Polish fellows on the printer. You'll be wanting me to start sending off the messages we have for them, will you, sir?"

Both Thurston and Dalessio looked up at the travelling-clock that stood on a high shelf in the corner. It said eight o'clock.

"THAT'S just about all, gentlemen," the Colonel said. "Except for one last point. Now that our difficulties from the point of view of communication have been removed, and the whole show's going quite smoothly, there are other aspects of our work which need attention. This unit has certain traditions I want kept up. One of them, of course, is an absolutely hundred-per-cent degree of efficiency in all matters affecting the disposal of Signals traffic, from the time the In-Clerk signs for a message from the Staff to the time we get . . ."

He means the Out-Clerk, Thurston thought to himself. The little room where the officers, warrant-officers and senior N.C.O.s of the unit held their conferences was unheated, and the Colonel was wearing his knee-length sheepskin coat, another piece of merchandise supplied through the good offices of Jack Rowney in exchange, perhaps, for a few gallons of petrol or a couple of hundred cigarettes; Malone's men's cigarettes, probably. The coat, added to the C.O.'s platinum-blond hair and moustache, increased his resemblance to a polar bear. Thurston was in a good mood, having just received the letter which finally buttoned up arrangements for his forthcoming leave: four days with Denise in Oxford, and then a nice little run up to Town for five days with Margot. Just the job. He began composing a nature note on the polar bear: "This animal, although of poor intelligence, possesses

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considerable cunning of a low order. It displays the utmost ferocity when menaced in any way. It shows fantastic patience in pursuit of its prey, and a vindictiveness which . . ."

The Colonel was talking now about another tradition of his unit, its almost unparalleled soldier-like quality, its demonstration of the verity that a Signals formation *of any kind* was not a collection of down-at-heel scientists and long-haired mathematical wizards. Thurston reflected it was not for nothing that the Adjutant so frequently described himself as the Colonel's staff officer. Yes, there he was, Arctic fox or, if they had them, Arctic jackal, smiling in proprietary fashion at his chief's oratory. What a bunch they all were. Most of the higher-ranking ones had been lower-ranking officers in the Territorial Army during the thirties, the Colonel, for instance, a captain, the Adjutant, a second-lieutenant. The war had given them responsibility and quick promotion, and their continued enjoyment of such privileges rested not on their own abilities, but on those of people who had arrived in the unit by a different route: Post Office engineers whipped in with a commission, older Regular soldiers promoted from the ranks, officers who had been the conscripts of 1940 and 1941. Yes, what a bunch. Thurston remembered the parting words of a former sergeant of his who had been posted home a few months previously: "Now I'm going I suppose I can say what I shouldn't. You never had a dog's bloody chance in this lot unless you'd been at North Midland Command with the Adj. and the C.O. And we all know it's the same in that Mess of yours. If you'd been in the T.A. like them you were a blue-eyed boy, otherwise you were done for from the start. It's all right, sir, everybody knows it. No need to deny it."

The exception to the rule, presumably, was Cleaver, now making what was no doubt a shorthand transcript of the Colonel's harangue. Thurston hated him as the Adjutant's blue-eyed boy and also for his silky fair hair, his Hitler Youth appearance and his thunderous laugh. His glance moved to Bentham, also busily writing. Bentham, too, fitted into the picture, as much as the Adjutant would let him, which was odd when compared with the attitude of other Regulars in the Mess. But Bentham had less individuality than they.

"So what I propose," the Colonel said, "is this. Beginning next week the Adjutant and I will be making a series of snap inspections of section barrack-rooms. Now I don't expect anything in the nature of spit-and-polish, of course. Just ordinary soldierly cleanliness and tidiness is all I want."

In other words, just ordinary spit-and-polish, Thurston thought, making a note for his sergeant on his pad just below the polar-bear *vignette*. He glanced up and saw Dalessio licking the flap of an envelope; it was his invariable practice to write letters during the Colonel's addresses, when once the serious business of line-communications had been got through. Had he heard what had just been said? It was unlikely.

The conference broke up soon afterwards and in the Mess ante-room, where a few officers had gathered for a drink before the evening meal, Thurston was confronted by an exuberant Adjutant who at once bought him a drink. "Well, Tom," he said, "I reckon that fixes things up nice and neat."

"I don't follow you, Bill."

"Step number one in cooking your friend Dally's goose. Step number two will be on Monday, oh-nine-thirty hours, when I take the Colonel round the line-maintenance billet. You know what we'll find there, don't you?"

Thurston stared blankly at the Adjutant, whose eyes were sparkling like those of a child who has been promised a treat. "I still don't get you, Bill."

"Use your loaf, Tommy. Dally's blokes' boudoir, can't you imagine what it'll be like? There'll be dirt enough in there to raise a crop of potatoes, fag-ends and pee-buckets all over

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the shop and the rest of it. The Colonel will eat Dally for his lunch when he sees it."

"Dally's got three days to get it cleaned up, though."

"He would have if he paid attention to what his Commanding Officer says. But I know bloody well he was writing a letter when that warning was given. Serves the bastard right, do you see? He'll be off to the mysterious East before you can turn round."

"How much does the Colonel know about this?"

"What I've told him."

"You don't really think it'll work, do you?"

"I know the old man. You don't, if you'll excuse my saying so."

"It's a lousy trick and you know it, Bill," Thurston said violently. "I think it's completely bloody."

"Not at all. An officer who's bolshie enough to disobey a C.O.'s order deserves all he gets," the Adjutant said, looking sententious. "Coming in?"

Still fuming, Thurston allowed himself to be led into the dining-room. The massive green-tiled stove was working well and the room was warm and cheerful. The house had belonged to the commandant of the Belgian military school. Its solid furniture and tenebrous landscape pictures had survived German occupation, though there was a large burn in the carpet that had been imputed, perhaps rightly, to the festivities of the *Schutz Staffel*. Jack Rowney, by importing photographs of popular entertainers, half-naked young women and the Commander-in-Chief, had done his best to document the Colonel's thesis that the Officers' Mess was also their home. The Adjutant, in excellent spirits, his hand on Thurston's shoulder, sent Corporal Gordon running for a bottle of Burgundy. Then, before they sat down, he looked very closely at Thurston.

"Oh, and by the way, old boy," he said, a note of menace intensifying the quack in his voice, "you wouldn't think of tipping your friend Dally the wink about this little treat we've got lined up for him, would you? If you do, I'll have your guts for garters." Laughing heartily, he dug Thurston in the ribs and added: "Your leave's due at the end of the month, isn't it? Better watch out you don't make yourself indispensable here. We might not be able to let you go, do you see?"

EARLY on Monday Thurston was walking up from the signal office towards the area where the men's barrack-rooms were. He was going to find his batman and arrange to be driven some twenty miles to the department of the Advocate-General's branch which handled divorce. The divorce in question was not his own, which would have to wait until after the war, but that of his section cook, whose wife had developed an immoderate fondness for R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. personnel.

Thurston was thinking less about the cook's wife than about the fateful inspection, scheduled to take place any minute now. He realised he had timed things badly, but his trip had only just become possible and he hoped to be out of the area before the Colonel and the Adjutant finished their task. He was keen to do this because the sight of a triumphant Adjutant would be more than he could stand, especially since his conscience was very uneasy about the whole affair. There were all sorts of reasons why he should have tipped Dalessio off about the inspection. The worst of it was, as he had realised in bed last night, when it was too late to do anything about it, that his irritation with Dalessio over the matter of the Polish teleprinter had been a prime cause of his keeping his mouth shut. He remembered actually thinking more than once that a thorough shaking-up would do Dalessio no harm, and

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that perhaps the son of an Italian café-proprietor in Cascade, Glamorganshire had certain disqualifications for the role of British regimental officer. He twisted up his face when he thought of this and started wondering just why it was that the Adjutant was persecuting Dalessio. Perhaps the latter's original offence had been his habit of doing bird-warbles while the Adjutant and Rowney listended to broadcast performances of *The Warsaw Concerto*, the intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and other sub-classics dear to their hearts. Cheeping, trilling and twittering, occasionally gargling like a seagull, Dalessio had been told to shut up or get out and had done neither.

Thurston's way took him past the door of the notorious line-maintenance billet. There seemed to be nobody about. Then he was startled by the sudden manifestation of two soldiers carrying brooms and a bucket. One of them had once been in his section and had been transferred early that year to one of the cable sections, he had forgotten which one. "Good-morning, Maclean," he said.

The man addressed came sketchily to attention. "Morning, sir."

"Getting on all right in No. 1 Company?"

"Yes, thank you, sir, I like it fine."

"Good. What are you fellows up to so early in the morning?"

They looked at each other and the other man said: "Cleaning up, sir. Fatigue party, sir."

"I see; right, carry on."

Thurston soon found his batman, who agreed with some reluctance to the proposed trip and said he would see if he could get the jeep down to the signal office in ten minutes. The jeep was a bone of contention between Thurston and his batman, and the batman always won, in the sense that never in his life had he permitted Thurston to drive the jeep in his absence. He was within his rights, but Thurston often wished, as now, that he could be allowed a treat occasionally. He wished it more strongly when a jeep with no exhaust and with seven men in it came bouncing down the track from the No. 1 Company billet area. They were laughing and two of them were pretending to fight. The driver was a lance-corporal.

Suddenly the laughing and fighting stopped and the men assumed an unnatural sobriety. The reason for this was provided by the immediate emergence into view of the Colonel and the Adjutant, moving across Thurston's front.

They saw him at once; he hastily saluted and the Adjutant, as usual, returned the salute. His gaze met Thurston's under lowered brows and his lips were gathered in the fiercest scowl they were capable of.

Thurston waited till they were out of sight and hurried to the door of the line-maintenance billet. The place was deserted. Except in illustrations to Army manuals and the like, he had never seen such perfection of order and cleanliness. It was obviously the result of hours of devoted labour.

He leant against the door-post and began to laugh.

"I GATHER the plot against our pal Dally misfired somewhat," Bentham said in the Mess dining-room later that day.

Thurston looked up rather wearily. His jeep had broken down on the way back from the divorce expert and his return had been delayed for some hours. He had made part of the journey on the back of a motor-bike. Further, he had just read a unit order requiring him to make the jeep available at the Orderly Room the next morning. It wasn't his turn yet. The Adjutant had struck again.

"You know, I'm quite pleased," Bentham went on, lighting a cigarette and moving towards the stove where Thurston stood.

"Oh, so am I."

"You are? Now that's rather interesting. Surprising, even. I should have thought you'd be downcast."

Something in his tone made Thurston glance at him sharply and put down the unit order. Bentham was standing with his feet apart in an intent attitude. "Why should you think that, Ben?"

"I'll tell you. Glad of the opportunity. First of all I'll tell you why it misfired, if you don't already know. Because I tipped Dally off. Lent him some of my blokes and all, to get the place spick and span."

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Thurston nodded, thinking of the two men he had seen outside the billet that morning. "I see."

"You do, do you? Good. Now I'll tell you why I did it. First of all, the Army's not the place for this kind of plotting and scheming. The job's too important. Secondly, I did it because I don't like seeing an able man taken down by a bunch of ignorant jumped-up so-called bloody gentlemen from the Territorial Army. Not that I hold any brief for Dalessio outside his technical abilities. As you know, I'm a Regular soldier and I disapprove most strongly of anything damn slovenly. It's part of my nature now and I don't mind either. But one glance at the Adj.'s face when he was telling me the form for this morning and I knew where my duty lay. I hope I always do. I do my best to play it his way as a rule for the sake of peace and quiet. But this business was different. Wasn't it?"

Thurston had lowered his gaze. "Yes, Ben."

"It came as a bit of a shock to me, you know, to find that Dalessio needed tipping off."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that I'd have expected someone else to have told him already. I only heard about this last night. I was the only one here later on and I suppose the Adj. felt he had to tell someone. I should have thought by that time someone else would have let the cat out of the bag to Dally. You, for instance. You were in on this from the start, weren't you?"

Thurston said nothing.

"I've no doubt you have your reasons, your excuses for not letting on. In spite of the fact that I've always understood you were the great one for pouring scorn on the Adj. and Rowney and Cleaver and the rest of that crowd. Yes, you could talk about them till you were black in the face, but when it came to doing something, talking where it would do some good, you kept your mouth shut. And, if I remember rightly, you were the one who used to stick up for Dally when the others were laying into him behind his back. You know what I think? I don't think you care tuppence. You don't care beyond talking, any road. I think you're really quite sold on the Adj.'s crowd, never mind what you say about them. Chew that over. And chew this over and all: I think you're a bastard, just like the rest of 'em. Tell that to your friend the Adjutant, Captain bloody Thurston."

Thurston stood there for some time after Bentham had gone, tearing up the unit order and throwing the pieces into the stove.

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TABLE TALK

TOWARDS the end of the war, it was discovered that the Germans were still making steel coat-hangers, which showed either that their war economy was badly organised (it was) or that we underestimated their productive capacity (we did). And the point of this reminiscence is that it is often minor matters of detail that illuminate the state of things, that enable us to see what is happening. It is in this spirit that I report, as the most remarkable thing that I saw in a recent visit to provincial France, the number of washing-machines on sale at a French cattle fair. True, it was a big cattle fair; true, the cattle were fetching very high prices. But the washing-machines, nevertheless, were significant of a change in the rural and small-town life of a very conservative country, of that mechanisation of everyday life that we may deplore, approve, or merely note, but which is going on all around us.

It is easy to be sceptical of the value of such "improvements," especially if one is a man and has no more first-hand acquaintance with the problems of laundry work than is furnished by dunking nylon shirts in hotel wash-basins. We have no literary or artistic symbols for the washing-machine. No mechanised Nausicaa has, as yet, greeted a new Ulysses descended from his plane or space ship. No new Daumier has found for us a symbol like that of the women descending to the quayside. And the intellectuals, fed on such symbols, afraid—or professing to be afraid—of a civilisation run by and for gadget-minded people, turn from the washing-machines, seeing in them the symbol of a death of the soul.

That such fears are often fostered for dubious political ends does not mean that they are not real, not natural, and not deserving of some serious attention. These fears for our ancient European culture are—and ought to be—real. There can be no doubt that in the struggle for souls that is going on in Europe, we of the West are often more successful in offering washing-machines, at a price, than we are in finding legends for our new life.

THERE is another side to the question. For we do offer these gadgets at a price that not all can pay. Woodrow Wilson, just before the arrival of the Model T, saw in the motor car a source of exacerbation of class conflict, since so few could afford these much coveted luxuries. And in the Bourbonnais or in the Romagna, washing-machines may be a sign, not only of a spiritually empty culture, but of a mechanised culture to which the masses are denied admittance. We have to face the charge that, not only are the mere devices of "comfort" all we have to offer, thus incurring the scorn of the heirs of Stendhal, but also the charge that, for us, they are goods kept necessarily scarce and that in the rival society they will be "joys in widest commonalty spread." The French or Italian peasant who is told this second tale may not believe it; he may have more long-term scepticism than we think. But he may also be human enough to wish that what he can't have, others should not have. For we do lack in Europe that American expectation of sharing, the "deal me in" spirit which Professor David Potter has recently and rightly noted as a distinguishing mark of American society and a barrier to the adoption of theories of class war.

And the worker who does not rise to the philosophic heights of "nice work if you can get it" or to the next stage "you can get it if you try," yet, by his envy, testifies to a fact that we, the intellectuals as a class, are reluctant to accept: namely that our Western European culture is already irremediably Americanised, mechanised; that it is a matter of mere degree, differing from country to country; but that there is no turning back short of a catastrophe that will wreck far more than the gadgets. What the average man or the "common man" wants is just that mechanised and, to the sophisticated, banal civilisation of which the

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washing-machine is perhaps a harmless—and the juke-box (now invading Paris) a less harmless—symbol.

This possibly depressing truth has been brought home to me by five visits paid to countries of western Europe in the twelve months that have just passed, visits broken in two by three months in the United States. Even in those twelve months, it was easy to see, not only marked economic progress, a rise in the material standard of living, but a marked rise in the infiltration into European society of what we call "Americanism." It may be only the continuing impact of symbols like Donald Duck, not now quite representative of American mass culture, but there it is. And I think, I am sure, that I have noted among European intellectuals a resentment of this fact that makes them culturally "neutralist," often under the guise of being defenders of a threatened heritage. How often have I heard invocations of old and threatened European values that, by implication and sometimes by more than implication, were variations on the theme "America go home!" With the political aspects of this I have no concern here. But I wondered, often enough, where in Europe were the sources of new, living art-forms, expressive of the new civilisation that is coming to us. We are in danger of clutching our artistic *lares et penates* to our bosoms as we flee from the condemned city, without noticing where we are going with them, or whether the city is really totally condemned. Words like "Europe" are very loosely used indeed. And they are used too often *exclusively*, as "Hellas" might have been used by an Athenian culture-snob ignoring Ephesus and Alexandria, not to speak of Rome.

WHAT meaning is to be given to the word "Europe" is, again, far too deep and wide a question to be dealt with even in the most casual table talk (which has always in it the temptation to settle great questions smartly). But on my recent trips I have, as usual, been busy looking into bookshops and bookshop windows. What I have seen has been, in a sense, more alarming than the washing-machines. For it is striking how mediocre is the international literary taste represented by translation, in this case by translations from English or American into French or German. There seems to be, at the moment, a least-common-denominator culture that neither represents the best of the old nor the promise of the new civilisation. Again, I don't want to be pompous about it. One country always makes mistakes about the literature of another. (Of course it also often sees more promptly and more deeply than the natives do, as a man in love is both blind and preternaturally perspicacious.) But the list of Nobel prizemen in literature, compared with the list of Nobel prizemen in physics or chemistry, is a ground for sobering reflection! Were mistakes so common before 1939? Were countries so regularly represented by their second best?

I don't take too seriously the temporary success of the world best-seller. Herr Feuchtwanger or M. Dekobra did not deceive many people about their long-term importance. I was not very shocked some years ago to come out of the great church of Montfort l'Amaury on Easter Sunday morning, to find the bookstall covered with banal pious literature—and *Ambre. Ambre*, as it turned out, was not for ever and—a good sign—*Autant Emporte le Vent* has survived. But it is more serious to find in various German cities so much space given to writers a little above the level of Miss Winsor, still more to find, in a very chic bookshop in Paris, a most lavish *édition de luxe* of a novel by a British writer whom it would be unkind to name, but who is certainly of no lasting importance and who would never be treated with such comic solemnity in his own country. If we are going to fight whatever threat the washing-machine is, it will not be by clinging desperately to all our inheritance and by treating the trivial as the profound because it is solemn. That culture cannot compete with the washing-machine or the Cv.2 or the Vespa. The young people who decide for the material rather than the literary products of the machine age show good judgement; and even the juke-box may be less an opium of the spirit than are the modern equivalents of Martin Tupper. Indeed, the great American sin may well be not the machines it exports, but the books it imports, the authors to whom it gives not only too much money, but too great esteem. We have our own Ehrenburgs, not much less dangerous for being more honest.

D. W. Brogan

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Reflections in a Japanese Mirror

THE few Japanese films that we in Britain have so far had a chance to see have deservedly earned high praise. It would be well to remember, however, that the Japanese, like the French and the Italians, make a great many pictures, the majority of which do not merit a showing outside their countries of origin, and we are apt therefore to think all foreign films better than our own. The best Japanese films are costume pieces, set in feudal times of three hundred or so years ago, as is the case in the traditional theatre; and while it is perfectly easy to follow the story with the aid of the usual subtitles, I have been interested to observe a certain restlessness among European audiences. This is not, I think, altogether due to the great length of most Japanese films, but more to a natural inability to identify oneself with characters whose motives and behaviour are so different from our own. It is also worth noting that all Japanese have a passion for the contemplation of natural scenery; and in most typical novels there are frequent digressions, where the action is held up by long descriptive passages. This national characteristic has understandably influenced the making of films, with the result that few Japanese directors have mastered the art of cutting. From the point of view of a Western audience, even the most exciting Japanese films undoubtedly engender a certain feeling of boredom.

The difficulty about understanding Japan is the psychological dichotomy of the people. How is it that a nation with an inborn sense of beauty, exquisite manners, and an exceptional capacity for human kindness can also behave with the most ruthless brutality? It is essential first of all to accept the fact that the Japanese *are* different from us. We in the West have for long been subjected to the disciplines of Greek humanism, Christian and Jewish mysticism, the Roman legal system, and so on; the Japanese, deliberately cut off by their rulers from the rest of the world for hundreds of years, have remained untouched by the formative influences that have made us what we are. Japan is still what may be described as a nation of "natural" human beings; and since "natural" man is imbued with many savage instincts, it was necessary to surround him with an elaborate framework of social barriers. Japanese discipline rests on reacting to a given situation in strict accordance with a rigid system of gestures and rites, and this accounts both for their stoicism and their extreme politeness. From a Japanese viewpoint there was nothing odd about the welcome afforded to the army of occupation; it was entirely in accordance with the national code of behaviour.

The difficulties arise in the unknown situation—modern war for instance. The system has worked well enough in normal circumstances but inevitably it breaks down in conditions for which the code has made no provision. It is this, I believe, that largely accounts for the extreme tensions in the Japanese temperament and the striking contradictions of behaviour. Moreover, certainly until after the war, Japanese education was designed to develop the aggressive instincts, and Spartan training together with unthinking obedience and a rigid adherence to an elaborate code of manners combined to produce a nation of explosive creatures, ready to burst like a bomb the moment the safety-pin, in the form of the norm—the known condition—was withdrawn.

These contradictions, these extremes of behaviour are well displayed in two recent films,

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Seven Samurai and *Children of Hiroshima*. The spectator with little or no knowledge of Japanese civilisation (and this, it may be assumed, applies to most members of the audience) will, if he sees only one of them, leave the cinema either in a state of bewilderment or with his preconceived ideas confirmed, according to whether he wishes to think well or ill of the Japanese. Each concentrates exclusively on one side of the Japanese character, and by itself gives, at any rate to a Western audience, a false impression. But the two films complement one another in such a way that while they do not make it possible for the spectator to build in his mind a synthesis of the Japanese character, they do succeed in showing very clearly the nature of the dichotomy; incidentally, they also explain to some extent why the attempts by the occupation authorities to introduce our particular brand of democracy into Japan were bound to fail.

SEVEN SAMURAI is based on a familiar theme, the plight of the professional warrior, the *Samurai*, who has lost his master, either by death or estrangement; it is the theme of most of the great Japanese classical dramas, and, outside the big cities, still the only form of film story which appeals to the masses, being in effect the Japanese equivalent of the old-fashioned "Western." The difference is that to us a "Western" is simply an exciting story of adventure set in a period that has practically no connection with the problems of present-day life; it is, to use the current jargon, merely a means of escape from reality. We do not take it seriously; nor do we identify ourselves with the characters. In Japan it is quite otherwise; the fact that the story of *Seven Samurai* takes place in the 16th century in no way prevents a Japanese from regarding this as a contemporary story. The chief reason for this is, I think, that despite industrialisation the countryside has remained unchanged; in particular, domestic architecture outside the cities is still exactly the same as it was three hundred years ago. Besides, the style of peasant dress and behaviour has hardly changed at all over the centuries; a Japanese farmer, in his present-day clothes, could appear in one of these medieval films without looking in the least incongruous.

By our standards *Seven Samurai* is over-long; it runs for nearly three hours and the action is frequently interrupted (as it is in typical Japanese novels) by sequences of great scenic beauty which do nothing however to carry the story forward. The actual plot is of the utmost simplicity: a village, tired of being constantly raided by a gang of bandits, enlists the services of seven *ronin* (Samurai who have lost their master) to protect them. The arrangement is successful; peace comes to the village and at the end we see the survivors of the original seven leaving in search of further adventures. That is all that happens; but such is the skill with which the film has been directed (by Akira Kurosawa, who also made *Rashomon*) that at no time does it occur to the spectator that he is only watching a display of virtuoso acting. The fights, and there are a great many, are performed with astonishing bravura, and display a savagery such as by comparison make the battle scenes in the film of *Julius Caesar*, for instance, seem like the nursery play of little children.

CHILDREN OF HIROSHIMA, which has, of course, a modern setting, represents the other side of the medal. A young school-teacher returns to her native city some eight years after its destruction. She visits the grave of her parents, both of whom were killed in the disaster, and then goes on to look up some of the children who had been in her kindergarten class in earlier years. It is not possible to sit through this film, which makes great use of the documentary technique, without feelings of the utmost distress. I am not here concerned with its wider social implications, which could be immense, especially in all those countries whose inhabitants will certainly have no opportunity to see it. Strangely, it has been suggested in some quarters that *Children of Hiroshima* is a work of thinly-veiled Communist propaganda. In point of fact its production was, I understand, largely sponsored by various Christian communities in Japan, and while it certainly does contain a "message," it is in no sense a political one. Its great fault is that it ignores completely those traits in the Japanese character which, because they were never kept in check, led to the destruction of Hiroshima. We see a series of pitiful characters who behave towards each other with almost saint-like devotion in their adversity. I am not suggesting that the attitude is exaggerated. It is not; but just as in *Seven Samurai* the emphasis is entirely upon brutality, so here it is concentrated upon loving kindness. It is, I suppose, true that all people possess

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elements of both these characteristics, but whereas our Western heritage has resulted in blunting both, only in Japan, with its curious history, do both still exist in an extreme form—hence the dichotomy in the national character. It is for this reason that it is desirable to see both these films. The one offsets the other; either, by itself, can hardly fail to cause an occidental spectator to draw the wrong conclusions.

WE HAVE come so to rely upon documentary and other similar kinds of films to inform us about foreign countries that we are apt to forget that some things can still be better done by means of the old-fashioned still camera. The late Werner Bischof, examples of whose work have recently been exhibited in most of the European capitals, was a photographer of genius, and his book of pictures* dealing with every aspect of Japanese life is in my opinion the most remarkable collection of photographs ever published. These 109 reproductions, of which 29 are in colour, are arranged in three groups dealing respectively with old Japan, the present day, and the traditional theatre. I commend particularly number 78 (a farmer's family at dinner), which, although taken only a year or so ago, might easily belong to the period depicted in *Seven Samurai*; nothing could better illustrate the unchanging nature of peasant life in Japan.

To describe Mr. Bischof as an artist-photographer is to give a wrong impression of his special gift. He was most certainly an artist, but his distinction lay in the fact that he was first and foremost a photographer; he never in any circumstances fell into the trap, as so many others have, of trying to make his camera do what can only be done with a pencil or brush. There are here no blurred outlines; nothing is faked or out of focus; nor, as far as I have been able to judge, has there been any retouching. The skill is entirely in the selection of the viewpoint, and the camera has been left to do the rest.

Special praise is due for the order in which these photographs have been arranged. This has been so skilfully contrived that at the end one gets the impression of having read an informed book about Japanese life. In point of fact each picture is provided with an excellent short commentary, and the twenty-page introduction by Robert Guillain, who is the foreign editor of *Le Monde*, is a model of what such things should be: well-written, sympathetic, and highly informative.

John Morris

* *Japan*. By WERNER BISCHOF. Sylvan Press. 52s. 6d.

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Communications

The British Intellectuals

SIR—First let me summarise, in a few sentences, the main argument of Edward Shils's essay in your April issue in order that, if I am misunderstanding him, my misunderstanding may do the less harm for being apparent.

In England, the intelligentsia are a specialised branch of the professional class as a whole. Until recently, they were at odds with the other branches, but now, owing to a revival of national solidarity (you can't hate your own country so easily when she is down and being kicked), relations have improved, and both sides are behaving more decently. There are, however, two types of culture in England: first, the traditional culture of the leisured class, depending on non-specialisation and a humane inclusiveness of outlook, and naturally going along with the other features of a high standard of living. Secondly, a pattern of intellectual and artistic life created by the mercantile classes during and since the 19th century; more specialised, more "earnest," not metropolitan or in any other way associated with privilege or tradition: its typical fruits the vast concert-halls in provincial cities, the growth of "cultural" clubs and societies among humbler people, and—perhaps primarily—the modern universities.

But—Mr. Shils goes on—this second type of culture is nowadays on the run. The only kind of culture anyone wants is the older, more graceful kind. No man of substance is prepared to cut himself off from the triangle Oxford–Cambridge–London. As a result, the English intelligentsia become more and more an offshoot, or dependency, of the governing class. The intellectual and artistic work they produce reflects the attitudes only of this class, and the remaining forty-five million are left to speak for themselves.

The first thing to be said of this summary of Mr. Shils's article is that it is incontestably true. The working class who man the country—drive its machines, produce its raw materials—and the business class who mainly organise it, are almost entirely ignored by the people who create art and disseminate ideas. (May I break in at this point to say that I do not think the word "intellectual," used as a noun, a very useful one. It is a bureaucrat's word, necessary sometimes; but it blankets too many very diverse kinds of people; a sculptor and a marine biologist are both "intellectuals," which is absurd.) The result of this concentrating on the top crust of English society is two-fold. First, there is a powerful upward pull. The lower-middle classes, having no art, literature, or philosophy which speaks for them and to them, will have to ape the *mores* of those higher up, if they are to participate at all. Hence, in part, the widespread English tendency to equate "culture" and education with social status. Oxford and Cambridge contain many brilliant teachers, but even if they were staffed entirely by nonentities there would be no falling-off in the number of people wishing to be educated at the same universities as the Prince of Wales and the Peerage. A very high proportion of undergraduates at these two universities, perhaps more than half, are consciously using the university as a means of crossing the fence from one class to another. (I could reveal, privately, some extraordinary data about this.) Hence the more able members of the working and lower-middle classes are diverted from the task of creating a "culture" which would reflect the *milieu* from which they came. (I use the word "culture" in inverted commas when I do not mean it in the anthropological sense.)

Those who are left, once the cream has been skimmed off, are incapable of becoming articulate at the "cultural" level. Their abilities go into business or technology. Very often these people, especially in middle life, have a deep hankering for "culture," but their only solution is to buy it; they cannot make it for themselves. Their wives learn the practical arts, such as interior decoration, from magazines which are produced by middlemen, who dilute the ideas of the original artists of a decade earlier; their reading is selected by Book Clubs staffed by the literary equivalent. In other words, they live on the dregs of a "culture" produced by the social group above them.

The working class—i.e. about three-quarters of the population—are even worse off. They are untouched by the lower fringe of the country's "official" intellectual and artistic life, and their own traditional art and thought has died out, leaving them entirely at the mercy of the entertainment

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industry and the popular press. George Orwell's remark that the citizen of a modern Western industrial country was "æsthetically inferior to the lowest savage" looks, at first sight, like an angry exaggeration; actually it is a literal truth (he may be superior to the savage in other ways, of course). Rural customs died out long ago; but I should say it was during my own lifetime that the popular culture of the Northern industrial poor, based on whippets, black puddings, mother-in-law jokes, and traditional songs has disappeared—because the life that produced it has disappeared.

It is sometimes said—Mr. Shils says it himself—that there is currently an attempt, by some writers, to reaffirm the vitality and vigour of provincial life. I cannot say that I agree. The most successful product of that "movement," so far, has been a satirical novel whose main butt is the aping of upper-class culture by the provincial bourgeoisie; the "hero," whose point of view is the novel's focus, is represented as being as nearly as possible without "culture" of any kind (part of the ironic fun, of course, is that he is a university lecturer: it would not have been funny if he had been, for instance, a grocer). There has been, all in all, a fair amount of accurate sniping at the entrenched values of the metropolis and the ancient universities, but it has come from inside, from people who are products of the system themselves, and in some respects highly characteristic ones. The last person who seriously represented the "other" intelligentsia was D. H. Lawrence; his education, partly from non-institutional, almost "folk" sources, and partly at a Redbrick college, was obviously useful to him and his work testifies to it nobly; but it is significant that Lawrence was a rebel and could find, socially speaking, no other pattern of behaviour than to *be* a rebel.

I do not know what is to be done about it, and have only one concrete suggestion to offer. This is that the position of the modern universities, their status in the eyes of people generally, could profitably be strengthened. They already have a wealth of ability on the teaching side; what they need is a better choice of material to work on. At the moment, most able students get into Oxford or Cambridge; it is obviously absurd to suggest that they should obligingly go to Leeds or Birmingham instead. The solution is to revert to the medieval system and make the universities peripatetic. No matter which university a man enters in the first place, he should be required to spend the second of his three years in moving, a term at a time, from one to another among the rest. Oxford men would obviously go to Cambridge for a term, and *vice versa*, but for the remaining two they would make their choice among the modern universities.

I shall be told, of course, that I am simply trying to "level down"; the provincial student would benefit, but the man from an ancient and fashionable university would merely waste a year in places where he would learn nothing. The only answer to this is merely to indicate the facts. In my own subject (English literature), for instance, an undergraduate at Oxford or Cambridge is debarred from the lecturing and teaching of—to name a few—such men as William Empson, L. C. Knights, Allardyce Nicoll, G. Wilson Knight, John Butt, Bonamy Dobrée, F. T. Prince, Kenneth Allott, I. A. Shapiro, Peter Ure, J. C. Maxwell, Kenneth Muir—is that enough, or shall I go on? I have not included the Scottish universities or London, and, obviously, I have not mentioned any of my own colleagues or personal friends. It is absurd to say that the gifted undergraduate would not benefit by the teaching and conversation of these men. And at the end of their three years, many of them would look back and say, "I enjoyed my terms at Oxford (Cambridge) best, but I must say I got more *ideas* at——" wherever it was. This would use the available stock of intelligence more effectively, and would help to rescue the modern universities from what is, ultimately, a class stigma. It is intolerable that these famous critics and scholars should be faced, year after year, with classes that contain too few able men, while these same able men have counted themselves lucky to get into an Oxford or Cambridge college where, as likely as not, they are tutored for three years by Mr. Snooks, who was elected to a fellowship because he is a good Common Room man and knows how to look after the cellar. (I'm not particularising; there are Mr. Snookses everywhere, and doubtless the provincial ones are worse.)

As regards the working class, I just do not know what to say. Everything that makes up culture, in any sense—their songs, dances, stories, visual and plastic arts, cookery, vital beliefs, patterns and attitudes—are at present handed to them by someone else, usually someone who belongs to an utterly alien culture. A board outside my local newsagent's informs me that "a new picture-story love magazine," or some such description, "for women," has just been launched. The name of the paper is *Marilyn*. Everything, you see, has to come from somewhere else. Marilyn for them, Lady Barnett and Sir Mortimer Wheeler for the group next above, Sartre for the sixth form: only when we reach the microscopic "upper" level do we find anything resembling a native intelligentsia, talking openly to one another. *Encounter*! But what are we to encounter—except a vacuum?

JOHN WAIN

University of Reading

SIR—I have read Mr. Shils's account of the British Intellectuals right through with fascinated interest. It describes a world with which I have no personal acquaintance (except perhaps for a few

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literary reviewers in the offices of the *New Statesman and Nation*). I can believe that everything—or, to be more accurate, nearly everything—he says is true about somebody or other in this country. But nothing in his account either of the 1930's or of the 1950's relates to anything in my experience.

That, no doubt, is because, though I am constantly accused by trade union Members of Parliament of being a "damned intellectual," my species of intellectualism is not one in which Mr. Shils is interested. Like Michael Foot, Hugh Gaitskell, Harold Wilson, Hugh Dalton, Barbara Castle and—if I dare mention the name in ENCOUNTER—Aneurin Bevan, I have lived most of my adult life in the British Labour Movement, getting elected first to a City Council and then to Parliament, serving on endless Party committees, voting in endless divisions, and speaking and writing about Socialism. Some of the people whose names I have listed disagree with me very violently, but I think they would all agree with me in saying that the kind of lives we have led, the kind of values we have, and the kind of ideas we hold are not considered by Mr. Shils. Here, for instance, is part of his description of the 1930's:

> The capitals of the intellectuals' ideal commonwealths varied. For some it was Moscow, which held the hearts of more than members of the Communist Party; for others, it was Baghdad, or Paris, or Berlin, or Los Angeles—it was in any case not London. It was certainly not Manchester or Bristol or Liverpool or Glasgow.

I suppose those of us who can be classed as Socialist intellectuals were unbearably provincial in the 1930's, but my capital throughout that period was certainly London, and the places which I cared about were Oxford and the respectable suburb of Headington, which we turned into the first "Red" ward. Later my loyalties were divided between Oxford and Coventry. When we were not helping to organise the fight against Fascism, we all dreamt, planned and worked for the Labour Government which became a reality in 1945. We may have been oversentimental and over-optimistic in our hopes of what that Labour Government would do, but our lives were lived and our loyalties were felt for the British Labour Movement to which we had attached ourselves and which accepted us, somewhat sceptically, as middle-class people who might be some good in the long run if we were prepared to work our passage and have our smooth edges roughed off.

Of course, it is true that in this period a great many people came into the Labour Movement because they were homeless souls in need of a religion or a cause or a course of psychoanalysis. We never took these hangers-on very seriously and were not surprised after the War (when, instead of preaching Socialism, we had to practise it) to discover that they had found happiness in the Catholic Church, in the Communist Party, or in Bohemia. What does surprise me is that Mr. Shils should write at length about their pseudo-political activities, as though the British Left in the 1930's consisted exclusively of readers or writers of Left Book Club books.

Mr. Shils describes how these lost intellectuals of the 1930's have regained a pride in their country and accepted the "aristocratic gentry culture" which he has discovered to be the prevailing mode of British intellectual life. Again, this may be so. But some of us were never lost (at least in this sense). Because we grew up in a democratic Labour Movement which was rooted in British life, we never became the cosmopolitans and anarchists he describes. Anyone, for instance, who had the privilege of lecturing, as many of us did, night after night, year after year, in dilapidated school halls, to the crowded classes of the Workers Educational Movement, could not possibly lose his faith in the British people, however despicable the policy of the British Government, and however lamentable the failure of leadership displayed by the then ruling class.

I realise, of course, that American intellectuals find this difficult to understand because they themselves were deprived of the possibility of self-fulfilment in an American Labour Party with a Socialist faith. That, no doubt, is one reason why liberals, who in Britain would have got their stiffening and backbone from British Labour, drifted into an infantile Leftism, which made them easy prey for the Communists. We have no right to blame them for this mistake, for which many of them have paid an outrageously high price. But I think it would help Anglo-American relations if Mr. Shils and others who write about this country recognised this difference and investigated Britain's intellectuals with an open mind.

I admit, however, that there is one practical obstacle to such an investigation—the absence of documentation. Far too many of the intellectuals who were writing about Socialism in the 1930's have now become practical politicians, whose writing is limited to current journalism or drafts of speeches. The greatest deficiency of the British Labour Movement since the war has been the absence of successors to R. H. Tawney, A. D. Lindsay, G. D. H. Cole, and Harold Laski. Even Evan Durbin, who published one of the best books on British democratic socialism before the war, had ceased to be a writer and become an administrator before he died. As far as I know, only one Socialist of the middle generation is now writing a serious book, and that is John Strachey, who has just begun the second volume of a three-volume study of social democracy.

But does a Socialist intellectual cease to be an intellectual because he devotes his life to the practical realisation of Socialism? Surely not. If Mr. Shils would like to see that the "triumph of the contemporary version of the aristocratic gentry culture," to which he refers, is not so complete as he suggests,

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I would propose that, on his next visit to England, he should visit (1) Transport House and, in particular, its Research Department, which houses a few intellectuals who have successfully resisted this culture; (2) the House of Commons; (3) the Labour Group of any great provincial City; and that he should make the climax of this tour a full week's attendance at our annual Party Conference. Then he might modify his judgement:

Continental holidays, the connoisseurship of wine and food, the knowledge of wild flowers and birds, acquaintance with the writings of Jane Austen, a knowing indulgence for the worthies of the English past, an appreciation of "more leisurely epochs," doing one's job dutifully and reliably, the cultivation of personal relations—these are the elements in the ethos of the newly emerging British intellectual class. It is around an ethos of this sort that nowadays the new attachment to Great Britain is formed.

Come, come, Mr. Shils! I shall look forward to your reading this aloud to any group of delegates at Margate next October and seeing how they react to your sociological investigations.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

House of Commons

SIR—You are to be congratulated on your venture of analysing the present situation of the intellectual in some of the principal countries of the free world, and Mr. Shils deserves thanks for having presented his opinion in regard to Britain. But I fear that the "inner ring," as he calls it, of those intellectuals who have achieved "unification with the other groups of the ruling élite" is still painfully small, while the great majority of intellectuals continues to be regarded, by the great majority of Britons, either with amused condescension or—more frequently—with contempt. (That uneasiness with which they are often met on the continent of Europe seems hardly to exist here.)

Some indication that the unification of which Mr. Shils writes is very incomplete may be gathered from what is said in public about intellectuals. Take Mr. N. G. Fisher, formerly Director of Education in Manchester, who in lecturing on "The Intellectual in Contemporary Society" recently went on record as saying that "ideologically the intellectual retained a stubborn faith in communism." It is hardly conceivable that a comparable misjudgement of so fantastic a nature could be uttered about the Government, Members of Parliament, civil servants, or any other group with whom, according to Mr. Shils, the intellectuals have now been unified. (It should be acknowledged that the *Manchester Guardian* accompanied its report on Mr. Fisher's address with an ironical editorial.)

Some more evidence against Mr. Shils's impressions may be found in the fact that apparently very few people in this country would like to be termed intellectuals. This has often struck me as a curious feature of public life in Britain. It makes sense of a sort in a world which despises the intellectual, but why should he continue to hide himself if he had reached the enviable status described by Mr. Shils?

Not being a native of this island, I wondered whether I was perhaps under a misapprehension on this matter. Therefore, before addressing the now defunct Fulham Readers Circle on the subject of intellectuals four years ago, I wrote to a small number of what I considered prominent British intellectuals asking whether they agreed with this description, and inviting them to volunteer some general observations.

The result was shattering. Not one of them wanted to be called an intellectual. The most significant reply in the light of Mr. Shils's analysis, was that from Earl Russell, who, one might think, in his very person represents both that aristocratic culture and intellectual achievement which according to Mr. Shils have now come together. But the answer I received from the great man ran:

"I have never called myself an intellectual, and nobody has ever dared to call me one in my presence.

"I think an intellectual may be defined as a person who pretends to have more intellect than he has, and I hope that this definition does not fit me."

H. O. ALEXANDER

London, W. 14

SIR—Professor Shils's judgement, in his article on the British Intellectuals, that during the economic difficulties of the second half of the forties, patriotism over here "was nurtured by anti-Americanism" cannot be allowed to go unchallenged.

During that period, as managing director of the publishing firm that bore my name, and editor of *Penguin New Writing*, I had not a little to do with the exchanges between English and American authors, visited the United States twice, and constantly received American authors, editors and publishers in my office and my home. I cannot remember that any such atmosphere as Professor Shils so emphatically records for the purposes of his argument ever existed. In my recollection relations among the literary intellectuals of the two countries during the period were extremely harmonious: British intellectuals found their opposite numbers in America sympathetic, admiring (even) and shrewd in their understanding of the British situation, and were for the most part extremely anxious to appreciate at its proper value all that was going on in the American literary world. Almost all American authors of distinction and promise were published by British houses, and were

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received by the intelligent critics (in the main) with hope that they might stimulate our own authors and enthusiasm for what they had already achieved. There is certainly not the slightest evidence that they were decried or undervalued simply because they were American.

Professor Shils observes: "Animosity against naïve, boorish and successful America heightens the gratification which British intellectuals derive from their national self-contemplation." This is a ludicrously false view of the period 1945–50 in Britain. That there has been a change for the worse since then is, however, true, though it has not in my opinion been due to the reason Professor Shils alleges. It began with the Korean war, when it first became apparent to the rest of the world that American Generals, Admirals, and Senators were—at any rate if judged by their reckless utterances—eager to advocate the most impetuous actions against the Communist world and risk a Third World War without sober weighing of the consequences. The disagreeable effect which these utterances had (and continue to have) was almost immediately increased by the "witch-hunt" inaugurated by Senator McCarthy. Britain has not been alone in her revulsion against these manifestations of impatience and intolerance, and personally I have found that most of my American friends agree with our attitude. Let America show her other face once more, her generous, liberal, and wise face, and there will be no more of the "animosity" Professor Shils believes we nourish to salve our wounded national pride.

JOHN LEHMANN

London, S.W.3

Movies in Mexico

SIR—In Mr. Woodcock's otherwise accurate "Letter from Mexico" in your January issue, there is one error which I should like to correct.

Woodcock writes that the Mexican cinema is invariably devoted to big-city themes. I cannot possibly imagine what is the basis for this remark. The fact is that almost all Mexican films revolve around village life, and their plots are scaled down to the intelligence of the peasant, e.g. a poor-but-beautiful girl is seduced by the local bully, and her honour is saved when, in the end, an equally poor-but-handsome *charro* kills the bully in a gunfight. The musical background is always appropriately folkloric; the photography never fails to include shots of horses, cacti, and a small church.

Indeed, the only films produced in Mexico during the last years which dealt with cosmopolitan subjects were *Nosotros los Pobres*, *Reportaje*, *Los Olvidados*, and *Cuando Se Levante la Niebla*. Not very much when you consider Mexico turns out over 150 pictures a season.

ERIC LEE

México 4, D.F.

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BOOKS

Flight to Nowhere

UTOPIANISM is today the most discreditable form of social thinking. The reasons for this "diabolification" of perfectionist political theories are too well known to require discussion. It is perhaps worth noticing, however, the paradox that utopianism, once despised for its impracticability, its impossibly high intent, is now feared for its all too realisable aims. The old cry of empirical age to idealist youth was "You can't change human nature"; it has turned now to a tragic warning "You little know how easily your *human* nature can be changed."

Utopianism, then, appears to be gone for at least some decades from respectable Western political thought, although it is well to notice, as I shall suggest later, that there are some sections of anti-utopian thinking whose own ideas have all the seeds of an utopianism every whit as alarming as the Marxist perfectionism they rightly abhor. Utopian fantasy, however, an ever growing flood since the end of the last century, shows no sign of abating. Indeed, utopian satire has proved the most powerful of all literary weapons against utopianism. It is this modern utopian fantasy, appearing from the late 19th century onwards, which is the subject of Dr. Gerber's* book.

Dr. Gerber is a Swiss lecturer in English literature who was from 1950 to 1952 a research student at Cambridge. The present work is the result of that research. It has both the virtues and the vices of an academic thesis written upon a genre which rarely attains to the level of serious literature. Such subjects, lying somewhere between literature and sociology, relating to the unconscious result rather than the declared intent of some branch of modern popular writing, increasingly attract academic notice. The consequence, as in Dr. Gerber's case, is well-reasoned work satisfactorily documented, as it would not be if it were undertaken by journalists or popular writers, whose field it might previously have been considered to be. Nevertheless, there is in such academical attention to popular themes a tendency to stop short before the really interesting aspects of the subject have been discussed. This fault is also apparent in Dr. Gerber's book. It cannot be attributed to academic timidity, if that well-known emotion has in fact any existence. It is due, rather, I think, to a certain doubt about the subject's academic suitability after it has been undertaken. This leads the writer to concentrate on the more respectable literary exponents of his theme, while only indicating the significance of the second- and third-rate writers. Yet it is surely in these latter that the full social importance of any popular form of writing is to be found. No one, for example, would expect Dr. Gerber to deal in detail with the vast mass of second-rate works he lists in his bibliography, but an analysis of one or two of these would have told us more, I suggest, than the full attention he gives to Orwell, Huxley, and Wells, let alone to Butler, William Morris, Bacon, More, and even Plato, who come so much outside the time range of his study. Perhaps it is time that, to the academic mind, lends worth. No Professor, I think, would disregard or fear to include the second-rate historic as he would the second-rate modern. Dr. Gerber's own Ph.D. thesis, it is worth noting, was on James Shirley.

HIS discussion, however, as far as it goes, is excellent. He divides his subject into three parts. In the first he distinguishes the Utopian fantasies laid in the far future: books concerned with the end of the world, the development of man in the last æons of the world's existence, his conquest of other planets in order to

* *Utopian Fantasy*. By RICHARD GERBER. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 16s.

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continue life after the world has cooled off. He rightly, I think, connects the urges towards this imagining with the growth of evolutionary theories, the fear and hopes of evolutionary humanists who have rejected personal survival for race survival, and who are faced in the distant future with the certainty of race annihilation. This is the fiction of much of Wells, of *Back to Methuselah* and of Olaf Stapledon. It survives, often very interestingly, in some popular science fiction. Nevertheless this vast, limitless, superhuman field, so beloved of Hodgson or Shiel, has seen its day. Dr. Gerber seems to agree, but he does not mention what seems to me the obvious reason. It is not surely the revival of religion, the decline of naïve rationalism like Winwood Read's; there are many serious rationalists still left and evolution is hardly rejected like perfectionism. It is surely rather that the immediate cataclysmic threat of the atomic bomb has decreased the impact upon the imagination of writers and readers, not only of the inevitable end of the world by natural causes, but even of man's evolutionary development in any form after the probably atomic war.

In the second section of his book, Dr. Gerber deals with the other main field of Utopian literature—the description of ideal societies, whether utopian or satirical. Here he distinguishes the purely arcadian earthly paradises, like those of William Morris or of Robert Blatchford, from the scientific, rationally argued ideal societies like those of Wells. He does not deal in detail with arcadian books like *News from Nowhere*, partly because they have become increasingly uncommon, but also, I think, because they are, in the true sense, fantasies. It is unfortunate, in fact, that his work is entitled *Utopian Fantasy*. Fantasy, as he quotes Herbert Read as saying, "dispenses with all logic and habit and relies on the force of wonder alone." *News from Nowhere* hardly does this, but it makes no attempt to ground its existence in either logic or habit, it springs professedly from a dream. The "fantasies" to which Dr. Gerber pays more attention are vitally concerned to found their kingdoms in both logic and habit; they are concerned, as Defoe was, by every trick of fiction or fake, by pseudo-science, by pseudo-history or by pseudo-geography, to convince by an appearance of realism. They are, in every sense, fiction and not fantasy.

Dr. Gerber describes the development of this type of fiction from utopianism to satire against utopianism. He deals only incidentally, however, with the impetus towards such imagination, and even here overkindly stresses the element of intellectual pastime, which is surely only the conscious surface of more sinister imaginative sources. He says nothing at all of the bases of the readers' satisfaction in this type of literature, a question which is not only psychologically interesting but raises the whole dilemma of political thought that tries to do without utopianism. In the present climate of empirical political theory, advocates of realism, whether of Right or Left, have to face the difficulty of engaging popular imagination in peace, without which the dangers of the social boredom and day-to-day materialism that undermined the Roman Empire must always be present, let alone the difficulty of arousing the heroism that annihilating war will demand. For the dangerous utopianism which once served these purposes, the answer of one large section is, of course, religious faith. Utopian subjection of the individual has, however, been known to accompany the actions of those whose heaven lies hereafter. In scanning anxiously with our blue pencils for traces of the sentiments of Marx or Gobineau, we should at least keep an eye out for Calvin or Bellarmine.

In the third and, perhaps, the most interesting section, Dr. Gerber discusses the literary problems of the writers of Utopian fiction. He exposes all the time-honoured devices by which the reader is led to put aside his incredulity and enter into the reality of Nowhere—the diaries washed up in bottles, the travellers returned, the time machines. He shows how from More's day, when the irony of this pseudo-realism was allowed full play, we pass through a continuous accretion of more and more realistic effects—the whole scientific impedimenta of Wells—until, in the last phase, realism is most neatly secured by no device at all, by simply entering the realm of Nowhere as does any other novel: by assuming its reality from the start. The height of this fiction he considers *1984* and *Brave New World*. They must, he suggests, be almost conceded the title of literature. He then considers the objections made to admitting utopian fiction as serious literature at all. He notes that failure to create real characters is one

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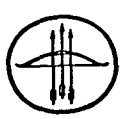

ANDRE DEUTSCH

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such objection, but does not seem to see that this lies at the very root of its failure to satisfy the full symbolic nature of great novels. Nor does he discuss why utopian writers cannot create character, why they do not care about this inability, and why their readers are satisfied without it.

It will be seen that the chief defect of Dr. Gerber's work is the lack of any discussion of the psychological foundation of Utopia-making. A review has not the space to discuss this important question. I can only point to the existence of a large number of intellectuals, who, either naturally obtuse towards other human beings, or on occasion fully sensitive to them, yet for personal reasons of deprived affection or whatnot, are ultimately contemptuous of them, but feel the imaginative drive not towards abstract sciences or technology but towards "Man" in collective terms. The problem has innumerable and vital ramifications. Perhaps some other academic writer, as painstaking and sensible as Dr. Gerber, will undertake the task.

Angus Wilson

A SACRED CAUSE AND ITS OPPONENTS

"THERE is something in our blood which repels all true progress," wrote the great Russian Westerniser, Chaadayev, a century and a quarter ago. And again: "The history of other nations is a story of their emancipation. Russian history is the development of serfdom and autocracy." Twenty-five years later, Alexander Herzen found it necessary to say: "I believe there is some justification for the fear which the Russian government begins to feel of communism: communism is the Russian autocracy turned upside down." At about the same time the Frenchman Michelet, with whom Herzen engaged in the sharpest controversy, recorded his belief that the Russian threat was not a military one: it was, rather, "the assumption of the role of a revolutionary power and of a true friend of progress under an absolutist form." He was supported by the apocalyptic ravings of the Slavophils, Pogodin, Tyuchev, and others, with their dreams of the redemption of the world by the Slavs (by which they meant the Russians). He was later fortified by the writings of Leontiev, who dreamt of the Tsar putting himself at the head of the socialist movement and organising socialism "as Constantine organised Christianity," and by Danilevsky, who anticipated Lenin and Stalin. Nearly a hundred years ago, Danilevsky was talking of the inevitable war with the West and the inevitable victory of Russia, the monolithic society of untapped virtue, united unquestioningly behind the beloved leader, which would cut through the doomed West, embarrassed by the class struggle and the conflicts of capitalism. "It is impossible," he wrote, anticipating also Mr. E. H. Carr, "to fight the historical course of events, as it is impossible to fight superior force. From these general considerations we gain the certitude that the Russian and Slav sacred cause, which is in truth the universal and pan-human cause, cannot fail."

All this stood behind Lenin. All of it is echoed today in the drill-books of the Moscow Communists. But something else stood behind Lenin. The Slavophils, the pan-Slavists, with their messianic vision and their total rejection of Europe have always been strong. But their poison has produced its own antidote. To Dostoievsky a Turgenev; to Pogodin a Belinsky; to Danilevsky a Solovyev—thus:

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for what we take and destroy, what spiritual and cultural principles we have to contribute to world history, then we must either be silent or indulge in meaningless phrases."

The poison remains today. Pan-slavism has given place to Leninism, a pseudo-Marxism, which has given point and drive to the messianic temper. Where is its antidote? What has happened to the opposition?

THIS urgent question is stimulated by a remarkable book, an anthology of 19th century Russian thought, compiled and brilliantly edited by Hans Kohn.* It is not indispensable in the strict sense, because all the originals are accessible to the serious student. But it is beyond price for those wishing to understand the Russian mentality, the currents of thought leading up to the revolution and carrying through to Stalinist chauvinism. The conflict most skilfully exposed is the great debate between the Westernisers and the Slavophils, between Petersburg and Moscow. And it is a debate that continues today, though the only voice we hear is the voice of Moscow. Reading, one asks what has happened to the opposition. Where is Chaadeyev today, where is Chernichevsky with his vision of freshness, where is Belinsky who was prepared to take on the mighty Russian Empire and lay down his own life in his battle against cant? How did Lenin triumph so entirely? And is his triumph final?

And, by a stroke of luck, we have another book† which seeks to answer these questions. It does not give the whole answer. But it is the first serious attempt to give it.

Nobody could be more modest than Professor Schapiro, nobody more quietly devastating. In presenting us with this first full account of the political opposition to Lenin—who has been allowed to get away with everything, up to and including murder, for thirty years of posthumous glory—he anxiously insists that it is not a history of the Russian revolution. Be that as it may, it is in the strict sense indispensable reading for all who have ever read or propose to read a formal history, and it makes a good deal of nonsense of all existing histories. In it the Russian revolution is rescued from Trotsky, Deutscher, and Carr. Professor Schapiro is neither a Marxist trying to vindicate Lenin at the expense of Stalin nor a political theorist trying to put himself on the right side of history. He takes his own view even of the success which holds for Mr. Carr an intoxication at once heady and sombre: "I do not share the predisposition of some contemporary historians, upon whom the hand of Hegel still lies somewhat heavily, in favour of the seemingly victorious side in history. Who are the victors, after all, and the vanquished? It would perhaps be wiser for the present to suspend the verdict as between Lenin and say Martov, or Plekhanov, or Chernov—or Struve, or even Stolypin." Professor Schapiro has no axe to grind. He is one of those rare creatures who feel pain when they see truth (such small incontestable aspects of the absolute as have been vouchsafed to us) deliberately ridden down. And so he engages on his search, telling, as he ranges through the vast cemetery of those who stood and fell by what we so complacently nowadays call Western Values, forgotten, unsung, trampled beneath the unspeculative beetle-crushers of the determinist historians, "the story of how a group of determined men seized power for themselves in Russia in 1917, and kept others from sharing it." One by one we meet the various revolutionary opposition parties and factions, and assist at their fatal crises—most importantly of all, the opposition inside Lenin's own party of Bolsheviks—culminating in a grand inquest into the Kronstadt rebellion and the protest of the Twenty-two. It is all documented extensively and in depth, the documentation so discreet that it never obtrudes, yet instantly available when required—and of immense importance, because this material has been dragged out of oblivion. There is very little comment. I wish there was more, because in his short introduction Professor Schapiro reveals a mind so delicately poised, so astringent, so luminous, so passionate in its devotion to justice and truth, that one wants to hear his personal comments on everything that crops up.

THAT, I suppose, would be too easy; we have to pay for entertainment and instruction by a mind so civilised. The price is a refusal to jump fences. Time and time again

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* *The Mind of Modern Russia.* Edited by HANS KOHN. Rutgers University Press: New Jersey. $5.50.

† *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy.* By LEONARD SCHAPIRO. Bell, for the London School of Economics. 35s.

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Professor Schapiro canters briskly up to a conclusion—and then jibs. I think he confuses conclusions with assumptions. He is superb in analysis, and he has a sense of people and of the human tragedy. He is at his best and strongest when analysing the political struggle among the revolutionaries, the personalities involved, the reasons for the total failure of the numerically overwhelming opposition to Lenin's creeping tyranny, and the precise character of that tyranny as it developed. He shows, most beautifully, *how* Lenin triumphed. He jibs at the *why*.

I think there is an impediment here. Arguing against those who, deploring Lenin's revolution (it was a minority *Putsch* against the background of a popular revolution), see in it—in view of Russian history—a certain inevitability, he says that though they may be right, their view is based upon an unverifiable assumption. I should call it an unverifiable conclusion. But it is a conclusion supported all along the line, not only by passage after passage in Mr. Kohn's selection, but also by the behaviour of anti-Bolshevik politicians and statesmen. And I think that Professor Schapiro's refusal to recognise when pressure of evidence turns an assumption into a conclusion is a flaw in this otherwise magnificent study. For if we forget the Russian aspects of Lenin's victory (which, as Professor Schapiro demonstrates beyond all possible doubt, carried in it the whole future of Stalinism) we shall never be able to recognise the true inwardness of the forces which still work against it. In denying the poison we also deny the antidote.

Edward Crankshaw

THE EMPEROR HAD CLOTHES AFTER ALL

THE story of how countries get into wars has often been told. The story of how they get out of them has received new interest because of the totalitarian or near-totalitarian circumstances in which such decisions may have to be made today. The fortunes and even the lives of the ruling group and the régime which they represent may well not survive the issue of an unsuccessful conflict, particularly if it be one they have themselves precipitated and in which they have given assurances of ultimate victory to a hard-pressed people. Certainly no Japanese leader in 1945 could ignore the fact that to defy the militarist cliques might mean personal extinction before any political benefit for the country could be derived from his action. It was, indeed, ironically, the unquestioned authority of the Emperor and nothing else that enabled Japan to withdraw from the war under the joint impact of the American atomic attack and the Russian invasion of Manchuria.

As Professor Edwin O. Reischauer points out in his preface to Professor Butow's study,* the precise date at which the saner forces in Japan got the upper hand and prevented, by surrender, the total destruction that might otherwise have come upon the country is also of great importance when considering the subsequent course of world history. If Japan had left the war earlier, its resumption of an active role in world politics might not have been so long delayed. If the surrender had come later, recovery might have been almost impossible. Professor Butow's book might therefore be regarded as primarily an attempt to establish why it was that surrender came at this precise juncture in Japan's affairs when, in fact, the conditions for it had already existed for some time, in the sense that Japan's military plan "had been geared to the idea that the United States could be induced to abandon what threatened to be a long-drawn-out war in return for a compromise peace." Furthermore, the fear of Communism, as Japan's position worsened, was present in Prince Konoye's mind from at least as early as February 1943. The originality of Professor Butow's book and the central core of his narrative derive from the detailed analysis of the course of events in Japan itself. This is based upon a study of the rich records of the Tokyo War Criminal Trials and documents collected in connexion with them, and upon other Japanese materials as well as personal interviews. These records have been by no means easy to interpret, in view of the

* *Japan's Decision to Surrender*. By ROBERT J. C. BUTOW. Stanford University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 32s.

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difference between Western and Japanese governmental procedures, and the difficulties of assessing the relative importance of seemingly analogous institutions. Even the contemporary record is likely to be misleading because of the practice known to the Japanese as *Haragei*, which seems to consist in a cherished determination to reveal as little as possible of one's own mental processes, even to one's closest associates. This makes it particularly difficult, for instance, to find out at what point the Prime Minister, Admiral Suzuki, himself became convinced that there was nothing but surrender to look forward to.

As already pointed out, there was an element of irony in the final working out of the situation. The militarist groups had always been able to force successive governments to direct their policies towards aggressive expansionism, in the name of the Emperor and under the presumed sanction of the "Imperial Will." Ministers who had endeavoured to stand up against the militarist pressure were publicly traduced and often physically removed. Despite the defeats of Japan during the war, this pressure upon the civilian government was successfully maintained almost until its conclusion, but the use of the Emperor's name to sanction expansionist policies meant a general commitment to accept his will even if he chose to exercise it in another direction. It was because the peace party eventually managed to establish direct contact with the Emperor through Court officials, that they were able to defeat the military party when, at the Imperial Conferences of August 9th to 10th, and August 14th, the Emperor personally declared it to be his wish that hostilities should be ended.

PROFESSOR BUTOW is not, however, concerned only with the Japanese side of the story. He has another and more positive purpose, which is to assert that an earlier surrender, and one which would therefore have obviated the necessity for Soviet intervention, could have been achieved if the Allies had been willing to make the one necessary concession to Japanese sentiment—an assurance about the future of the Imperial Dynasty—which, in the event, they did make anyway.

As he points out, there was no general agreement at Washington, in the crucial spring and summer of 1945, as to why Japan was continuing a hopeless struggle and refusing to entertain the demand for unconditional surrender. Washington clung to unconditional surrender. But—as Professor Butow points out—though this demand "sparked the imagination and perhaps even fired the resolve of many people on the Allied side, it is open to question whether that concept was not equally valuable in helping the Japanese militarists to dictate Japanese policy."

Just as the United States failed to take advantage before Pearl Harbour of her knowledge of Japan's purposes gained through intercepted messages, so in July 1945 its detailed knowledge—obtained in the same way—of Japan's attempts to negotiate a peace through the mediation of the Soviet Union was put to no use. The first of the intercepted messages was received and decoded in Washington on July 13th, that is to say, four days before the Potsdam Conference began. But despite the fact that there was no doubt of its authenticity, no one took any real notice of it, and policy was worked out seemingly unaffected by this knowledge of Japan's purposes. In part, no doubt, the American failure resulted from the general inadequacy in the American handling of wartime problems of foreign policy, which has been documented from so many sources. In part, however, there was a real division of opinion. Secretary Stimson would have been prepared to give some kind of guarantee about the Emperor in return for prompt Japanese acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation. Secretary Byrnes, however, supported in this by former Secretary Hull, opposed Stimson on the ground that it would mean "appeasement of Japan," and that it "seemed to guarantee continuance not only of the Emperor, but also of the feudal privileges of a ruling caste under the Emperor." This division at the top represented a division between American Far Eastern experts and "would-be experts" in their "interpretations of the role played by the imperial institution in the life of the Japanese people."

SINCE so much attention has again been fixed, through the publication of the Yalta Documents, on how the Soviet Union came to occupy its predominant position in the post-war Far East, it is worth noting the contribution that Professor Butow makes to this part of the story. Like every other impartial investigator, Professor Butow has no doubt but that the United States was committed by its own

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military assessments of the situation to getting the Soviet Union into the Far Eastern war, just as the Soviet Union, on its part, was determined to get in before the spoils could be shared without its participation. The American desire was, of course, largely based on the view that the Japanese still retained, in the Kwantung army in Manchuria, a powerful fighting force which would have to be overcome. This, however, was an illusion. The Kwantung army, writes Professor Butow, was "now nothing more than an empty shell." The Supreme Command's devotion to the idea of a final decisive battle on the shores of the homeland had "long since robbed the garrison in Manchuria of its troops and war equipment and had left it stranded there with little more than the 'spiritual power' to resist."

People who believe in determinist philosophies of history might well ponder the lessons of this sad chronicle of misunderstandings and miscalculations on both sides, and the dominance throughout of the personal elements, even if these elements could only be understood in the light of national traditions as different as those of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Japan. Among recent contributions to contemporary history, this work—marred only by a rather clumsy prose style—stands very high indeed.

Max Beloff

BLACK-AND-WHITE AFRICA

IT IS not only the quantity, it's the quality of fiction coming out of Africa during the last thirty years that is so impressive. Since the publication of Mr. William Plomer's *I Speak of Africa*, the library of serious novels and stories based on the south of that continent must be larger, in proportion to its literate population, than that of any other land on earth. And the more fearful the racial and political tension there, the greater, it seems, grows the spate of books.

Among these many authors it is unlikely there's a man or woman alive better equipped with knowledge and experience to write of his country than Colonel Laurens van der Post. His *Venture into the Interior* should be enough to qualify him for this position. The publishers describe *Flamingo Feather** as "a story of adventure." I suppose it is. Take Rider Haggard, W. H. Hudson, add a dash of John Buchan, sprinkle with fresh Koestler caviare, then drop the mixture into the African jungle in 1948—and you may have some idea of the flavour of *Flamingo Feather*. But only some. For this is a very serious book—one, moreover, with a message. This tragedy in which so many brave men lost their lives would not have occurred, writes Pierre de Beauvilliers, the narrator, "had we [white men] not closed our hearts to the black people in Africa. . . ." In fact these frightful events, he points out, will "all recur again with fuller, more desperate orchestration unless we change, not Russia, but ourselves."

Flamingo's Communist element—Moscow's secret arming of fifty thousand African natives from a ship plying between Capetown and an uncharted bay off the Indian Ocean—I took with a cellar of salt. I don't say it's impossible, but one knows it to be fiction. Yet the great merit of this novel is not that so much of it rings true—it *is* true, or, if you will, based on fact. We know, for example, that the author, like his narrator, spent years in Japanese prison camps. As for the remoter regions of Africa, we do not have to be reminded that he knows them as the Englishman knows the interior of his own home.

It is doubtful if any writer has depicted the climate, the veld, the forests, the Dead Land of the tsetse fly and sleeping sickness, the character of the Zulu, above all the birds, beasts, and flowers of South Africa, as they are painted in these pages. From passages on the animals alone (some of which had not seen man before) a small volume of quotations could be made.

The hippopotamus: "Slowly the doomed old gentleman came towards us with his lumbering rolling retired Admiral-of-the-Fleet's gait. . . . His head was so big that he nearly toppled over with it, yet his ears were tiny and coral pink as a woman's."

The zebra: "A great prince, looking as if he had walked straight out of a royal coat of arms, was making urgent love to a noble lady."

* *Flamingo Feather*. By LAURENS VAN DER POST. The Hogarth Press. 12s. 6d.

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The cobra: "The wide hood flared and flashed full out and with head swaying in the grass like a strange somnolent yellow poppy among harvest corn. . . ."

The baboon: "I saw a very old and very big baboon, sitting with his back to me in a toga of sunlight, his broad shoulders rounded, his head well tucked in and a long neurotic, oddly pedagogic finger, nervously scratching his head."

And here in a sentence is black-and-white Africa in the shape of a Madonna and Child:

"A child with snow-white face, tears not yet dry on its cheek, eyes shut, little fist of putty tightly clenched, was tugging like a puppy at her full breast, a fabulous aubergine in the sun."

Flamingo Feather is the perfect present for a boy—or am I being too subjective? Must one accept it as a fact that among the youth of today the interest in "space travel" and "scientific" fiction has taken the place of the passion earlier generations have felt for the little-known areas of the world?—a curiosity which in my case drew me to every book about the jungle I could lay my hands on, calling me out of England into Africa before the age of consent. Whatever the answer, I feel sure I would have enjoyed *Flamingo Feather* more at fifteen than I do now at the critical (in both senses of the word!) age of fifty. In my teens I know I should have hero-worshipped unreservedly Pierre de Beauvilliers, that indefatigable, indestructible gentleman adventurer with his power of endurance greater than the black man's and his intelligence, his foresight capable of outwitting (usually at the gallop or by air and invariably in the nick of time) the men of ill-will. Today, however, admire him as I must, I find the gent a bit of a prig and a know-all, a trifle too patronising and superior towards those less fortunate, less experienced, and physically weaker than himself.

WITH the Africa of Mr. Jack Cope we come figuratively down to earth, in reality to much the same earth over which de Beauvilliers flew in his desperate attempt to locate the Russian ship "Star of Truth." *The Fair House** reminds me of one of my father's favourite anecdotes about how, during the Boer War, he happened to see in one day on the veld Gandhi, Winston Churchill, Baden-Powell, and Edgar Wallace. Here, on that same veld, separated by a couple of pages, are two of these now famous men—Gandhi, "a slender little lawyer . . . ranked as a sergeant-major" leading a corps of Indian stretcher-bearers; and the sole survivor Churchill, "the new Colonial Minister—a Radical who used to be a Conservative," answering a protest in the House of Commons about the use of the dum-dum bullet in "civilised war."

That was just half a century ago, during the Zulu Rebellion of which *The Fair House* is a first-rate historical account in the form of fiction. For his central character, Mr. Cope, himself a South African, has chosen Tom Erskine, an officer in the militia, son of a wealthy, influential British landowner in Natal; and for heroine, Linda de Wet, an Afrikander girl whose father has been massacred by the Zulus during the Boer War. To complicate relations further, and yet at the same time to show historically how and why South Africa has become the land of seething hatreds it is today, Mr. Cope has given Tom Erskine "a sort of blood-brother"—a Zulu boy called Kolombe who, having been brought up with and educated by Tom, fails one day to report for *isibalo* (compulsory road service). As a result Kolombe has been "kicked off" the Erskine estate, has gone into hiding, and is sought by the police as "a criminal type." He is also being sought by Tom, because in Kolombe, the symbol of his race, the young white officer—an all-too-rare South African who thinks with his heart and not with his skin—sees his only chance of "warning his own people they are being led into a trap." Here is a situation wherein lies the awful dilemma of the white man whose loyalties are not once but thrice divided: by allegiance to his country, to his Afrikander fiancée, and to the Zulu whose life and history are part of his own. When Tom does find Kolombe it is to discover that his blood-brother has already been stealing arms from the whites. What is Tom to do? Report him, and thereby send not only Kolombe to certain death but "have every virgin who is dark and lovely . . . held down and raped" by white men? Or keep his secret, resign his commission, commit treason, and lose the girl he is planning to marry?

This all-too-brief summary may suggest, I'm afraid, that *The Fair House* is a short and simple story. It is on the contrary long and complicated, containing a list of no fewer than

* *The Fair House*. By JACK COPE. MacGibbon and Kee. 13s. 6d.

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thirty principal characters. The events leading up to the Rebellion, as well as the "campaign" itself, with its ghastly gun-and-assegai fighting and hideous atrocities, are clearly founded on fact. The novel is distinguished, moreover, by a remarkable lack of bitterness and for its description of the heroic last stand of the Zulus in the hills of Natal—a magnificent piece of writing. *The Fair House* is as convincing an exposition as I know of a country split in bleeding parts as a direct result of what Colonel van der Post calls "the white man's terrible failure to integrate the displaced, detribalised, the bewildered African into [his] community." For a first novel this book is a very considerable achievement.

RUSSIAN ROULETTE* is another first novel, also of great promise—if by now that much-abused phrase does not spell a book's immediate death! Mr. Anthony Bloomfield's world bears as much resemblance to South Africa as the climate of that country does to England's. As dreary as the back streets of Blackpool on a winter's Sunday, *Russian Roulette* is perhaps a little too reminiscent of Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock*. It also reminds me of the friend who never left his home with a bad hangover, in the certain knowledge that if he did so he would be drawn like a magnet to the sight of someone or something that would make him physically sick. Reeking of saloon bars and boarding houses, and certainly no dish for the squeamish, this novel tells nevertheless a taut, often terrifying tale.

Carr (Mr. Bloomfield spurns Christian names) is a middle-aged journalist who spurns journalism as "the profession of the second-rate." This morbid, sinister character has indeed little use for anything or anyone save his estranged wife and a young Corporation clerk called Robinson (more often referred to as "the boy"), who throughout the swift, sordid story is suspected of having murdered a tart. Robinson, in fact, was the last man Jean McCarless slept with before, that same night, she was found in bed, naked and strangled.

Russian Roulette is really a study of self-destruction played to its violent and somewhat improbable climax in a northern seaside resort of unparalleled squalor. The book, however, is also a portrait of a disappointed man who

* *Russian Roulette*. By ANTHONY BLOOMFIELD. The Hogarth Press. 12s. 6d.

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HART-DAVIS

transfers his affections from a dead woman to her lover and suspected murderer, a youth through whom he, Carr, proceeds to live a vicarious life. At the same time it is inevitable, even logical, Carr being what he is, that he should also wish, if only half-consciously, to destroy the new object of his affections, the obsessional shadow of his former self. This youth, Robinson, is a character no less cleverly drawn. Hypnotised by the elder man, he is nevertheless capable of falling in, or rather of drifting into, love with a "nice" girl called Alice. Here again, as the plot thickens, it is inevitable that Carr, seeing Robinson moving out of his grasp, should step in and start cautiously to ingratiate himself with the girl. The most extraordinary passages for a young man to have written are those in this novel in which Robinson, in utter despair, is faced with the choice of either surrendering himself for a crime he *has* committed or taking his own life. Mr. Bloomfield's descriptions of the emotions of a man in mortal terror, his insight into human nature at its lowest ebb, are quite uncanny.

AFTER slaughter in South Africa and murder in the north of England it comes as a relief to turn to what must surely prove to be the year's best-tempered book. To readers under the impression that the Deep South of the United States is one large Faulknerian sanctuary or a land populated by Capote freaks and McCullers cripples, *The Untidy Pilgrim** should come as both a pleasure and a surprise. Which is not meant to suggest that this is a book about "ordinary people": everyone in it, from the coloured retainers and the gloriously uninhibited girls to the solemn nameless narrator, is as zany and unpredictable as only Southerners can be. The difference is that the whole crazy crew from Mobile, Alabama are free and fearless human beings whose common belief is that life should be enjoyed. All they ask is ample opportunity to talk—a chance which Mr. Eugene Walter certainly gives them.

The most formidable as well as the friendliest of this lovable set of eccentrics is old Miss Fifield, or Fiff, whose one ambition in youth was to become a bareback rider and in old age still has "sweet anarchy in her soul." Fiff also has the habit, when wishing to change the subject of conversation, of staring off into space

* *The Untidy Pilgrim.* By EUGENE WALTER. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 12s. 6d.

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and saying: "It must be lovely in New Zealand today." She is only a little less direct and downright than the old artist Kosta, a grand Augustus John-like figure who mourns for nothing but his dead poodle and keeps "a special hate-file of people who never see the difference between a pet and a beast-companion."

The Untidy Pilgrim is the sort of comedy which, in the hands of an artist less pure than Mr. Walter, could so easily have disintegrated in woozy Southern whimsy. As it is, the book radiates the joy of living and, in its story of a youth growing up, contains passages which linger in the memory because they are moments of truth expressed with frankness and compassion.

James Stern

LIFE AMONG THE VIRUSES

APRIL 1945; ten years ago, in Moscow. We were having dinner. One of the maids waiting on us suddenly burst out crying and ran out of the room. I went out to ask her what was the matter. Have you bad news about your husband from the front? No. Are your children ill? No. What, then, is wrong? Slowly between the sobs it came out: she had been ordered to go to the NKVD after dinner that night to report on my movements. She was indignant at the disloyalty of having to spy on her employers. Are you not (she said) our allies? And I had to reassure her that it was the custom of her country and that we would not think ill of her for doing her duty; indeed we would be glad to help her in any way we could. With this encouragement she was comforted and she went off a few minutes later to make her report.

Anyone who has had this experience, and a score of others like it, is not likely to doubt either Dr. Borodin's integrity or his essential accuracy in this book.* But the reader unfamiliar with Russia needs some such assurance, because Dr. Borodin has written his autobiography in a peculiar style. He is a man of about fifty. He went to school in Tsarist Russia. During the famine of 1921 he was a boy of sixteen. He was a university student in the chaotic early days of Bolshevik rule. He recounts from these turbulent times the precise words of long conversations, verbatim accounts of speeches, particulars about clothes and food and furniture, which even Tolstoy, with his photographic genius for detail, could not have remembered. It would be a pity if, on this account, one were to doubt the reliability of Dr. Borodin's story. Although he has (in my view unwisely) chosen to present his autobiography in the form of a fantasia, he undoubtedly does convey an accurate and undistorted impression of what it was like for an intellectual, a biologist, a good patriot, to grow up under Soviet rule.

IT IS a fascinating story, full of naïve optimism and senseless cruelty, illuminated every now and then with the deep humanity and spirituality which the Russian people have preserved through all their trials. Listen to this introduction to a lecture "on an anti-religious subject" delivered by Borodin in his student days, as a social duty to the local village (and for which he was given a present of a hundred eggs):—

> "As you well know, comrades, we have now, thank God, the Soviet Power, which abolished the former God and replaced Him by Science. Science is better because it is more reliable. For instance, in the past, our former priests used to offer prayers for rain in summer, but not always with any result. Now science should soon reform such tricks and every old thing will be able to make his own rain, just by pushing a button. We shall soon live, comrades, better than was promised by the former church, the silly paradise where one does not eat or drink, but only sings and praises. Therefore, comrades, let us listen to our comrade from a town." After this short speech, some of the audience crossed themselves.

In that last sentence you have the tragedy (and the hope) of Soviet Russia.

Dr. Borodin suffered under the crazy pre-Bubnov era of Soviet education, when syllabus, teaching, and examinations in the University were all subject to control by a Party committee on which students themselves sat. One of the grave handicaps of Soviet science is the

* *One Man in His Time.* By N. B. BORODIN. Constable. 21s.

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way in which a whole generation of men now in their forties and fifties were the victims of this disastrous experiment in education started by Lunacharsky. Today, of course, the Soviet school and university are as rigorous in discipline and as exacting in standards as any in Europe.

In these difficult circumstances Dr. Borodin qualified as a bacteriologist and began research on disease-prevention among livestock. He vividly conveys the sense of vocation which he and thousands of his contemporaries had; the high responsibility of revolutionising Soviet animal husbandry; the adventure of building a new civilisation. Then the purges came. One after another his contemporaries were arrested, imprisoned, executed. Some of them lost their nerve ("Who is the next, Comrade Borodin, who is the next?") But most of them remained astonishingly unmoved. Dr. Borodin explains this:—

> I felt as though I had just been presented with a pair of wings, and most of all, there was no fear of liquidation in my bosom. I was a Red specialist and had nothing in common with "the dying classes who were thrown into their graves" and then, although statistics show a frightening number of daily deaths on the roads, one is never afraid to walk on them, one always thinks one is more careful about traffic than others.

What Dr. Borodin does not explain is why the Soviet Government jettisoned thousands of its young, enthusiastic, and skilled workers on the pretext that they were wreckers and saboteurs. It is a great disappointment not to find some explanation of this in Dr. Borodin's book, for he was uniquely qualified to know the answer: he himself became a Consultant of the Political Police and had to prepare some of the technical evidence which led to the liquidation of other scientists. He even gives four case-histories of men arrested for sabotage, but they are singularly unilluminating. One is left with a totally unconvincing theory; that the Russians, usually so realistic and pragmatic when their own welfare is concerned, succumbed to a panic of recrimination and persecution without realising what its consequences would be to the survivors.

DR. BORODIN is one of the survivors. With that absence of hypocrisy which Dostoievsky so vividly portrayed among Russians, he explains how he became interested in

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the methods of the GPU (as it then was). He does not seem to have been perceptive enough to understand their methods, but at least he had a recipe for keeping out of their clutches:

> I had not the slightest desire to receive a blow from this weapon on my own head, but at the same time, as far as I remember, I had no real fear of being crushed by it, as were so many others. It was not because I was particularly brave, but rather that I was optimistic in thinking that my hour would not come if I kept a strict control over my words and movements. This policy of behaviour was very like my work with pathogenic bacteria. I had no fear of them but my training as a microbiologist had taught me never to relax when handling them. In the past, while starting for the first time to work with the virus of rabies which induces a terrible and fatal disease in man, I had been warned that a microbiologist who is working with the virus can only make one mistake. These words of my teacher penetrated deeply into my mind. They were engraved on it. Were they not a golden rule to be used in life? Of course they were, and the long years proved that the path I had chosen was not the wrong one. I was never either infected or liquidated.

Far from being liquidated, Dr. Borodin received the Order of Lenin. But he was not unmoved by the annual harvest of broken men and women brought into the cellars of the NKVD. In 1948, when on a mission to the West concerning the manufacture of penicillin, Dr. Borodin decided quite simply, quite undramatically, to commit high treason: he renounced his citizenship of the U.S.S.R. Despite its imperfections and a certain straining after effect, this is a sincere and important book. It concentrates in one man's career the hopes and the potentialities, the treacheries and the disappointments, the material triumphs and the moral failure, of the Soviet State.

Eric Ashby

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SOCIALISM IN ADOLESCENCE

From Egypt to Argentina no politician can hope for mass appeal without making at least a verbal draft on the prestige of Socialism. And in Europe the authority of Socialist thought has spread so far that even the vaguest impulse of a Foreign Secretary is transfigured into statesmanship if only it is called a "Plan." Yet, though Socialism is the only political movement with the international influence to compare with Communism, it has never managed to organise this influence effectively. And though most European Socialist parties have long maintained a powerful hold on the electorate, on the Continent at least they seem near their climacteric with only a third of the popular vote. Though the limits of his enquiry are unduly rigid, Mr. Joll's study of the Second International* during the twenty-five years before the First World War throws light on both these weaknesses.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the growth of an organised working class gave to the intellectual élite, then leading the various Socialist groups in Europe, the chance of building mass parties. The problem was to reconcile the millennary conception of Socialism, as a society no longer inspired by the lust for power and profit, with the material demands of the under-privileged workers who offered the only mass following available for a policy of social

* *The Second International 1889–1914*. By James Joll. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 18s.

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change. Marxism seemed to provide the answer. By combining a prophetic moral fervour with an apparently scientific analysis of social development in terms of class-war, it had an irresistible appeal for systematic utopians. And since the German Social Democratic Party, by far the strongest of all in the Second International, was firmly committed to Marxism, most of the smaller parties easily succumbed to its fascination.

The outlook of most Continental Socialist Parties was determined by the fact that they could not reasonably hope for political power except as junior members of a coalition government. Mr. Joll is too impatient with their qualms about accepting office: the fact that this would normally have meant responsibility without power helps to justify their reluctance to compromise themselves, particularly at a time when the survival of parliamentary democracy was never at stake. But, of course, administrative inexperience and the unlikelihood of power led them to spend much time and energy arguing about general principles—first with the anarchists and syndicalists who rejected state action altogether, then with the Revisionists who realised that Marxism was mistaken both in its predictions about capitalist development and in its assumptions about how the workers really felt. The savage pharisaism of the die-hard doctrinaires was as effective then as now in inhibiting free thought. Eduard Bernstein, who in 1889 as the hatchet man of Marxism accused the Possibilists of working for the French Government, was himself to be called an agent of the German Government when ten years later he tried to wean the SPD from dogmas which had already ceased to guide its actions.

SO LONG as the argument mainly affected domestic issues, the International succeeded in imposing a general uniformity on its members. But when, in 1914, the Socialist Parties faced the test of war their unity broke down completely. They found that the bourgeois state was also a nation state. As Professor Carr has well expressed it, the socialisation of the nation through democratic reforms led to the nationalisation of Socialism. Each Socialist Party supported its own government, the Germans on the excuse that it was a war against Tsarist tyranny, the French on the excuse that it was a war against German militarism. And all the revolutionary internationalism of the Austro-Marxists crumbled under the fact that the Austrian workers put the nation first. "It is better to be wrong with the working-class than right against them," said Victor Adler.

As Mr. Joll points out, the disintegration of the Second International helped to decide the nature of the Third. The Socialists faced a choice between adapting their theories to the realities of popular feeling and forcing the people to conform to their theories. The democratic parties had to choose the former way. But the success of the October Revolution brought immense support for the totalitarian alternative. There remained some parties which refused to admit the gulf between theory and practice; these tried to reconstruct the old myths in the Two-and-a-Half, or Vienna, International. And there were individuals like Mussolini and Déat who turned towards fascism for satisfaction.

Mr. Joll stimulates reflection on the problems of any international organisation which depends on consent. There are close parallels between the activities of the Second International and Socialist cooperation since the Second World War. Then it was the German SPD which held the position which is now the British Labour Party's; its unique domestic strength gave it an international prestige and responsibility which it found an irritating distraction to fulfil. Then as now, apart from general resolutions which achieved unanimity only by equivocation, the International's main practical function was to produce a single party out of rival national claimants for recognition. Yet it is difficult to be sure that any of its interventions did more good than harm.

By disentangling all these threads, Mr. Joll has produced a clear and objective narrative. It is a pity that a dead-pan style robs the story of its colour. This period in Socialist development had much in common with the English Romantic Movement. Its leaders were men of exceptional humanity and intellectual vigour. But it is only in his few quotations from Jaurès and Rosa Luxemburg that Mr. Joll gives any idea of the turbulent poetry which infused the proceedings he chronicles so conscientiously. By pitching his story in so low a key he risks misrepresenting the spirit of a movement in which, at this period, the spirit was perhaps no less important than the substance.

Denis Healey

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